THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
1800

THE TRANSFIGURED CHURCH

By J. H. JOWETT, D.D.

The High Calling

Meditations on St. Paul's Letter to the Philippians. 12mo, cloth, net $1.25

The Silver Lining

A Message of Hope and Cheer. 12mo, cloth, - - - - net $1.00

Our Blessed Dead

16mo, boards, - - - net 25c

The Daily Altar

Cloth, - - - - net 25c
Leather, - - - - net 35c

Yet Another Day

32mo, cloth, - - - net 25c
Leather, - - - - net 35c
A new large type edition printed in two colors. Cloth, - - net 75c

The Passion for Souls

16mo, cloth, - - - net 50c

The Folly of Unbelief

And Other Meditations for Quiet Moments. 12mo, cloth, - net 50c

THE TRANSFIGURED CHURCH

BY

J. H. JOWETT, D.D.

NEW YORK CHICAGO TORONTO

Fleming H. Revell Company

LONDON AND EDINBURGH

BX7233
J65T7

Copyright, 1910, by
FLEMING H. REVELL COMPANY

New York: 158 Fifth Avenue
Chicago: 80 Wabash Avenue
Toronto: 25 Richmond St., W.
London: 21 Paternoster Square
Edinburgh: 100 Princes Street

©CLA273261

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	THE MINISTRY OF A TRANSFIGURED CHURCH	7
II.	THE WONDERS OF REDEMPTION	33
III.	THE LOVE OF GOD	47
IV.	THE MAGNETISM OF THE UPLIFTED LORD	57
V.	SON AND HEIR!	67
VI.	HIS MANY CROWNS	80
VII.	THE HALLOWING OF THE OUTER COURTS	89
VIII.	WHAT IS SIN?	99
IX.	A REGAL CONSCIOUSNESS	110
X.	LULLED BY HIGH IDEALS	119
XI.	THE DOOM OF NINEVEH	128
XII.	SOUND IN PATIENCE	138
XIII.	THE SECRET OF MORAL PROGRESS	148
XIV.	THY STRENGTH! MY STRENGTH!	158

CHAPTER		PAGE
XV.	BOLDNESS	169
XVI.	MEN OF VIOLENCE	181
XVII.	PLOUGH-WORK	191
XVIII.	THE ENERGY OF FAITH	204
XIX.	THE TESTIMONY OF THE CONSCIENCE	213
XX.	THE ART OF GIVING	224
XXI.	WANTED, A VERDICT!	235
XXII.	THE OLD ROAD AGAIN	244

I

THE MINISTRY OF A TRANSFIGURED CHURCH

"And when the day of Pentecost was come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them tongues parting asunder, like as of fire: and it sat upon each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. . . . And when this sound was heard, the multitude came together!"—Acts ii. 1-4, 6.

The wonder inside the Church aroused inquisitive interest without. There came to the Church an exceptional and plentiful endowment, and, as by the constraint of a mystic gravitation, the outside crowd began to move, like the waters swayed by the moon. The crowd may have moved towards the Church in the temper of a flippant curiosity, or in the spirit of unfriendly revolt, or in the solemn mood of appropriating awe. Whatever may have been the constraint, the waters were no longer stagnant, the masses were no longer heedless and apathetic; the heedlessness was broken up, interest was begotten, and "the multitude came together."

Is the modern Church the centre of similar interest and wonder? Is there any awed and mesmeric rumour breathing through the streets, stirring the

indifferent heart into eager questionings? The modern Church claims immediate kinship and direct and vital lineage with that primitive fellowship in the upper room. Does she manifest the power of the early Church? Does she reveal the same magnetic influence and constraint?

I know that "the Kingdom of God cometh not with observation." And so it is with the Spring. The Spring "*cometh* not with observation," but you speedily have tokens that she is here. She can hide her coming behind March squalls, and she can step upon our shores in the rough attire of a blustering and tempestuous day; but even though her coming may be without observation, her presence cannot be hid. And even so it is with the Kingdom: she may make no noisy and ostentatious display of her coming, but the sleeping seeds feel her approach, and the valley of bones experiences an awaking thrill, and "there is nothing hid from the heat thereof." I think, therefore, that we are justified in seriously inquiring as to the "resurrection power" of our Churches, the measure of their quickening influence, their net result in reaching and stirring and consecrating the energies of a community. How do they stand in the judgment? Is the Pentecostal morning repeated, and is the gracious miracle the talk of the town? Does the multitude come together, "greatly wondering"?

Carry the inquisition to the regular and frequent fellowship of the Church. So many times a week her

members gather together in the upper room. What happens in the hallowed shrine? Are we held in solemn and enriching amazement at the awful doings? And when we come forth again, is there about us a mysterious impressiveness which arrests the multitude, and which sends abroad a spirit of questioning like a healthy contagion? Can we honestly say that by our ordinary services the feet of the heedless crowd are stayed, and that the people come together "greatly wondering"? In answer to all these searching questions I think that even the most optimistic of us will feel obliged to confess that the general tendency is undisturbed, that we do not generate force enough to stop the drift, and that the surrounding multitude remains uninfluenced.

Now, when we consider these unattracted or alienated peoples, we can roughly divide them into three primary classes. First, there are those who never think about us at all. So very remote are the highways of their thought and life that the impulse of the Church is spent before it reaches their mental and moral abode. We can scarcely describe their attitude as one of indifference, because the mood of indifference would imply a negligent sense of our existence, and I can discern no signs of such perception. We contribute no thread to the warp and woof of their daily life. We bring no nutriment to the common meal; we do not even provide a condiment for the feast. Our presence in the city brings neither pleasure nor pang, neither sweet nor

bitter, neither irritation nor ease; their souls are not disquieted within them, neither are they lulled into a deeper and more perilous sleep. We are neither irritants nor sedatives; to this particular class we simply do not exist.

And, then, secondly, there are those who have thought about us, and as a result of their thinking have determined to ignore us. For all simple, positive, and progressive purposes we are no longer any good. We are exhausted batteries; we have no longer the power to ring a loud alarm, or to light a new road, or to energise some heavy and burdensome crusade. Our once stern and sacrificial warfare has now become a bloodless and self-indulgent quest. It is not only that the once potent shell-cases have been emptied of their explosive content, they have been converted into dinner-gongs! The once brilliant and unconditional ethical ideal has been dimmed and shadowed by worldly compromise. The pure and oxygenated flame of righteous passion has been changed into the fierce but smoky bonfire of sectarian zeal. We are looked upon as engaged in petty and childish controversy, losing ourselves in vague and nebulous phraseology, decking ourselves in vestures and postures as harmless and indifferent as the dresses worn at a fancy ball. That is the estimate formed of us by a vast section of the thinking crowd. You will find it reflected week by week in the labour papers, where we are regarded as straws in some side-bay of a mighty river, riding

serenely round and round and round, and we do not even show the drift of the stream, the dominant movement of our age. Our speech and our doings are of interest to the antiquary, but for all serious, practical, forceful, and aspiring life our Churches do not count.

And, thirdly, there are those who think about us, and who are constrained by their thinking into the fiercest and most determined opposition. To these men the Church is not like Bunyan's Giant Pope, alive but impotent, and "by reason of age, and also of the many shrewd brushes that he met with in his younger days, grown so crazy and stiff in his joints, that he can do little more than sit in his cave's mouth, grinning at pilgrims as they go by, and biting his nails because he cannot come at them." No, to this class the Church can do more than grin; it can reach and tear, and its ministry is still destructive. Its influence is perverse and perverting. Its very faith is a minister of mental and moral paralysis. Its dominant conceptions befog the common atmosphere, and chill and freeze "the genial currents of the soul." Its common postures and practices, its defences and aggressions, perpetuate and confirm human alienations and divisions. The Church cannot be ignored; it is not a harmless and picturesque ruin; it is a foul fungus souring the common soil, and for the sake of all sweet and beautiful things its nefarious influence must be destroyed.

This is by no means an exhaustive analysis of the

alienated multitude, but it is sufficiently descriptive for my present purpose. In each of these three great primary classes the people stand aloof, indifferent and resentful, and the Church is not endowed with that subduing and triumphant impressiveness which would turn their reverent feet toward herself. Now, how stands it with the Church? Does she seem fitted to strike, and arrest, and silence, and allure the careless or suspicious multitudes? What is there unique and amazing about her? Her Lord has promised her a marvellous distinctiveness. She is to be "a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing"! "A glorious Church": shining amid all the surrounding twilights with the radiance of a splendid noon! "Not having spot": no defect, no blemish, no impaired function, no diseased limb! "Or wrinkle": there shall be no sign of age about her, or any waste; she shall never become an anachronism; she shall always be as young as the present age, ever distinguished by her youthful brow, and by her fresh and almost boisterous optimism! "Or wrinkle, *or any such thing*"! Mark the final, holy swagger of it, as though by a contemptuous wave of the hand the Apostle indicates the entire rout of the unclean pests that invade and attack an apostate Church. "Or any such thing"! Are these great words of promise in any high degree descriptive of our own Church? Is this our distinctiveness? "Not having spot": have we no withered hands, no halt, no

blind, no lame, no lepers? "Or wrinkle": are we really distinguished by the invincible and contagious energies of perpetual youth? Does not the holding up of this great ideal throw our basal defects into dark and ugly relief? The pity of it all is just this, that the Church, with all its loud and exuberant professions, is exceedingly like "the world." There is no clean, clear line of separation. In place of the promised glories we have a tolerable and unexciting dimness; in place of superlative whiteness we have an uninteresting gray; and in place of the spirit of an aggressive youthfulness we have a loitering and time-serving expediency. There would be no difficulty, if only we had seized upon the fulness of our resources, and had become clothed with the riches of our promised inheritance, in men being able to distinguish, in any general company, the representatives of the Church of the living God. There would be about them the pervasive joy of spiritual emancipation, resting upon all their speech and doings like sunlight on the hills. There would be about them a spiritual spring and buoyancy which would enable them to move amid besetting obstacles with the nimbleness of a hart. "Thou hast made my feet like hinds' feet!" "By my God have I leaped over a wall!" There would be about them the fine serenity which is born of a mighty alliance. And there would be the strong, healthy pulse of a holy and hallowing purpose, beating in constant and forceful persistence. Such

characteristics would distinguish any man, and any company, and any Church, and the startled multitude would gather around in questioning curiosity. But the alluring wonder is largely absent from our Church. Men pass from the world into our precincts as insensible of any difference as though they had passed from one side of the street to the other, and not feeling as though they had been transported from the hard, sterile glare of the city thoroughfare into the fascinating beauties of a Devonshire lane. What, then, do we need? We need the return of the wonder, the arresting marvel of a transformed Church, the phenomenon of a miraculous life. I speak not now of the wonders of spasmodic revivals; and, indeed, if I must be perfectly frank, my confidence in the efficient ministry of these elaborately engineered revivals has greatly waned. I will content myself with the expression of this most sober judgment, that the alienated and careless multitude is not impressed by the machinery and products of our modern revivals. The ordinary mission does not, and cannot, reach the stage at which this particular type of impressiveness becomes operative. The impressiveness does not attach to "decisions," but to resultant life. The wonder of the world is not excited by the phenomena of the penitent bench, but by what happens at the ordinary working-bench in the subsequent days. The world is not impressed by the calendar statement that at a precise particular moment Winter relinquished her sovereignty

to Spring; the real interest is awakened by the irresistible tokens of the transition in garden, hedgerow, and field. It is not the new birth which initially arrests the world, but the new and glorified life. It is not, therefore, by spasmodic revivals, however grace-blessed they may be, that we shall excite the wonder of the multitude, but by the abiding miracle of a God-filled and glorious Church. What we need, above all things, is the continuous marvel of an elevated Church, "set on high" by the King, having her home "in the heavenly places in Christ," approaching all things "from above," and triumphantly resisting the subtle gravitation of "the world, the flesh, and the devil." It is not only multitudes of decisions that we want, but pre-eminently the heightening of the life of the saved, the glorification of the saints. The great Evangelical Revival began, not with the reclamation of the depraved, but with the enrichment of the redeemed. It was the members of the Holy Club, moving amid the solemnities of grace and sacred fellowship, who were lifted up into the superlative stages of the spiritual life, and who in that transition took a step as great and vital as the earlier step from sin to righteousness. Their life became a high and permanent miracle, and their subsequent ministry was miraculous. That is the most urgent necessity of our day, a Church of the superlative order, immeasurably heightened and enriched—a Church with wings as well as feet, her dimness changed into radiance, her stammering

changed into boldness, and presenting to the world the spectacle of a permanent marvel, which will fascinate and allure the inquiring multitude, drawn together "not that they might see Jesus only, but Lazarus also whom He has raised from the dead."

Now, what is the explanation of the comparative poverty and impotence of our corporate life? Why is the Church not ladened with the impressive dignities of her destined inheritage? Look at the manner of our fellowship. Is it such as to give promise of power and wealth? When we meet together, in worshipping communities, do we look like men and women who are preparing to move amid the amazing and enriching sanctities of the Almighty? Take our very mode of entry. It is possible to lose a thing by the way we approach it. I have seen a body of flippant tourists on the Rigi at the dawn, and by their noisy irreverence they missed the very glory they had come to see. "When ye come to appear before Me, who hath required this at your hands, *to trample My courts?*" That loud and irreverent tramp is far too obtrusive in our communion. We are not sufficiently possessed by that spirit of reverence which is the "open sesame" into the realms of light and grace. We are not subdued into the receptiveness of awe. Nay, it is frequently asserted that in our day awe is an undesirable temper, a relic of an obsolete stage, a remnant of pagan darkness, a fearful bird of a past night, altogether a belated anachronism in the full, sweet light of the

evangel of grace. I remember receiving a firm, but very courteous remonstrance from one of the children of light, because on the very threshold of a lovely summer's morning I had announced the hymn:—

> "Lo! God is here: let us adore
> And own how dreadful is this place."

And my friend said it was like going back to the cold, gray dawn, when disturbed spirits were speeding to their rest! It was like moving amid the shadows and spectres of Genesis, and he wanted to lie and bask in the calm, sunny noon of the Gospel by John! I think his letter was representative of a common and familiar mood of our time. I have no desire to return to the chill, uncertain hours of the early morning, but I am concerned that we should learn and acquire the only receptive attitude in the presence of our glorious noon. It is certain that many of the popular hymns of our day are very far removed from the hymn to which I have just referred. It is not that these hymns are essentially false, but that they are so one-sided as to throw the truth into disproportion, and so they impair and impoverish our spiritual life. Here is one of the more popular hymns of our time:—

> "O that will be glory for me,
> When by His grace I shall look on His face,
> That will be glory for me!"

Well, we all want to share in the inspiration of the great expectancy! It is a light and lilting song, with very nimble feet: but lest our thought should fashion

itself after the style of these tripping strains, we need to hear behind the lilt "the voice of the great Eternal," sobering our very exuberance into deep and awful joy. "When by His grace I shall look on His face!" That is one aspect of the great outlook, and only one, and therefore incomplete. I find the complementary aspect in these familiar words, "With twain he covered his face!" That is quite another outlook, and it introduces the deepening ministry of awe, which I am afraid is so foreign to the modern mind. "I feel like singing all the day!" So runs another of our popular hymns. That would have been a congenial song for my friend on that radiant summer morning when his thoughtless minister led him up to the awful splendours of the great white throne! "I feel like singing all the day": and the words suggest that this ought to be the normal mood for all pilgrims on the heavenly way. I am not so sure about that, and I certainly have grave doubts as to whether the man who feels "like singing all the day" will make the best soldier when it comes to "marching as to war." "The Lord is in His holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before Him." That is a contemplation which seeks expression in something deeper than song. "There was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour." What had they seen, what had they heard, what further visions of glory had been unveiled, that speech and song were hushed, and the soul sought fitting refuge in an awe-inspired silence?

When I listen to our loud and irreverent tramp, when I listen to so many of our awe-less hymns and prayers, I cannot but ask whether we have lost those elements from our contemplation which are fitted to subdue the soul into silence, and to deprive it of the clumsy expedient of speech. We leave our places of worship, and no deep and inexpressible wonder sits upon our faces. We can sing these lilting melodies, and when we go out into the streets our faces are one with the faces of those who have left the theatres and the music-halls. There is nothing about us to suggest that we have been looking at anything stupendous and overwhelming. Far back in my boyhood I remember an old saint telling me that after some services he liked to make his way home alone, by quiet by-ways, so that the hush of the Almighty might remain on his awed and prostrate soul. That is the element we are losing, and its loss is one of the measures of our poverty, and the primary secret of our inefficient life and service. And what is the explanation of the loss? Pre-eminently our impoverished conception of God. The popular God is not great, and will not create a great race. The Church must not expect to strike humanity with startling and persistent impact if she carries in her own mind and heart the enfeebling image of a mean Divinity. Men who are possessed by a powerful God can never themselves be impotent. But have we not robbed the Almighty of much of His awful glory, and to that extent are we not ourselves de-

spoiled? We have contemplated the beauties of the rainbow, but we have overlooked the dim severities of the throne. We have toyed with the light, but we have forgotten the lightning. We have rejoiced in the Fatherhood of our God, but too frequently the Fatherhood we have proclaimed has been throneless and effeminate. We have picked and chosen according to the weakness of our own tastes, and not according to the full-orbed revelation of the truth, and we have selected the picturesque and rejected the appalling. *"And He had in His right hand seven stars:"*—yes, we can accept that delicate suggestion of encircling love and care! *"And His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength:"* —yes, we can bask in the distributed splendour of that sunny morn! *"And out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword!"*—and is that too in our selection, or has our cherished image been deprived of the sword? *Why leave out that sword?* Does its absence make us more thoughtful and braver men, or does it tend to lull us into an easefulness which removes us far away from the man who, when he saw Him, "fell at His feet as dead"?

This mild, enervating air of our modern Lutheranism needs to be impregnated with something of the bracing salts of Calvinism. Our very Evangelicalism would be all the sturdier by the addition of a little "baptised Stoicism." Our water has become too soft, and it will no longer make bone for a race of giants. Our Lutheranism has been diluted and

weakened by the expulsion of some of the sterner motive-elements which it possessed at its source. If we banish the conceptions which inspire awe, we of necessity devitalise the very doctrines of grace, and if grace is emasculated then faith becomes anæmic, and we take away the very tang and pang from the sense of sin. All the great epistles of the Apostle Paul begin in the awe-inspiring heights of towering mountain-country, and all through the changing applications of his thought these cloud-capped eminences are ever in sight. Paul's eyes were always lifted up "unto the hills," and therefore his soul was always on its knees. If he rejoiced, it was "with trembling"; if he served the Lord, it was "with fear"; if he was "perfecting holiness," it was again "in the fear of the Lord!" Always, I say, this man's eyes were upon the awful, humbling, and yet inspiring heights of revealed truth. Our modern theological country is too flat; there are not enough cool, uplifted snow-white heights—heights like Lebanon, to which the peasant can turn his feverish eyes even when he is engaged in the labours of the sweltering vale. "Wilt thou forsake the snows of Lebanon?" "His righteousness is like the great mountains!" "Go! stand on the mount before the Lord!" "In the year King Uzziah died I saw the Lord, high and lifted up!" "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord." That was a mountain view. "And I said, Woe is me!" And that was the consequent awe. If the ministers of the Church were to dwell

in those vast uplifted solitudes strange things would happen to us. Our speech would be deepened in content and tone, and we should speak as they say John Fletcher of Madeley used to speak, "like one who had just left the immediate converse of God and angels." But not only so, there would be added to our speech the awful energy of a still more powerful silence. "Every year makes me tremble," said Bishop Westcott towards the end of his years—"every year makes me tremble at the daring with which people speak of spiritual things." Is not the good Bishop's trembling justified? Some time ago I preached a sermon on the bitter cup which was drunk by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. I noticed that one of the papers, in a reference to the sermon, said that I had spoken on the sufferings of Christ "with charming effect!" The words sent me to my knees in humiliation and fear. Soul of mine, what had I said, or what had I left unsaid, or through what perverting medium had I been interpreted? For the flippancy can be in the reporter as well as in the preacher, it can be in the religious press as well as in the consecrated minister. But let the application stand to me alone, and let me once again remind myself of Westcott's trembling "at the daring with which people speak of spiritual things." Ay, we are reckless and therefore forceless in our speech: we are not mighty in our silences. There are some things which our people must infer from our reverent silences, things which can never be told in speech,

and these mountain experiences are among them. That awe of the heights will deepen and enlarge both the ministry and the Church, it will enrich both her speech and her silences, and it will make her character unspeakably masculine, forceful, and impressive. "If in any part of Europe a man was required to be burnt, or broken on the wheel, that man was at Geneva, ready to depart, giving thanks to God, and singing psalms to Him." A mighty God makes irresistible men. History has proved, and experience confirms it to-day, that this mountain-thinking, with all its subduing austerities and shadows, would create a powerful and athletic Church, a Church of most masculine temper, courageous both in its aggressions and in its restraints, both in its confessions and its reserves, a Church that would rouse and impress the world by the decisive vigour of its daily life—never dull, never feeble, but always and everywhere "fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners." *"O Zion, get thee up into the high mountains!"*

But our impoverished conception of God is not the only cause of our comparative poverty and enfeeblement. The life of the Church is expressed in two relationships, the human and the Divine. The Divine fellowship has been impoverished by lack of height; the human fellowship has been impoverished by lack of breadth. We have not drunk the iron water from the heart of the mountains, and we have

therefore lacked a healthy robustness; we have not accumulated the manifold treasures of the far-stretching plain, and we have therefore lacked a wealthy variety. Our fellowship with God has been mean: our fellowship with man has been scanty. Nay, would it not be just the truth to say that the human aspects of our Church fellowship suggest a treasure-house which has never been unlocked? The Church is poor because much of her treasure is imprisoned; but she herself carries the liberating key to the iron gate! Our riches are buried in the isolated lives of individual members instead of all being pooled for the endowment of the whole fraternity. A very large part of the ample ministry of the κοινωνία has become atrophied, if indeed it has ever been well-sustained. I gratefully recognise the mystic, silent fellowship among the consecrated members of the Church of Christ. I know that out of the very heart of "him that believeth" there inevitably flow "rivers of living water," and I delight to allow my imagination to rest upon the well-irrigated country of this sanctified society. There is a mystic commerce altogether independent of human expedient or arrangement. We cannot bow together without some exchange of heavenly merchandise, without angel-ministries carrying from island to island the unique and peculiar products of their climes. The rich and enriching history of the Society of Friends is altogether corroborative of this great truth of spiritual experience. "When I came into the silent assem-

blies of God's people," says Robert Barclay, "I felt a sweet power among them which touched my heart, and as I gave way unto it, I found the evil weakening in me and the good raised up." But the human side of the apostolic κοινωνία includes riches other than these. It is not only a mystic interchange in the awful depths of the spirit; it is a fellowship of intelligence, it is a community of experience, it is the socialising of the individual testimony and witness. It is not only the subtle carriage of spiritual energy, it is the transference of visions, the sharing of discoveries, the assemblage of many judgments, whether in the hour of triumph or of defeat. "When ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation." That is the broader fellowship we lack, and we are all the poorer for it. The psalm that is born in one heart remains unsung, and the sadness it was fitted to remove from the heart of another abides like a clammy mist. The revelation that dawned upon one wondering soul is never shared, and so another remains in the cold imprisonment of the darkness. The private interpretation is never given, and for want of the key, many obstructing doors are never unlocked. This is the neglected side of the apostolic fellowship, and for the want of it the Church goes out to confront the world in the poverty of a starved individualism rather than in the rich and full-blooded vigour of her communistic strength. We are not realising the social basis of the

Church's life; Christian fellowship comprehends not only a meeting at a common altar, but a meeting at a family hearth, for the reverent and familiar interchange of our experiences with God, and of what has happened to us in our warfare with the world, the flesh, and the devil. In lieu of this broader and richer fellowship we have exalted the ministry of one man, and out of the limited pool of his experiences—and sometimes they are not even experiences, but only fond and desirable assumptions—the whole community has to drink, while the rest of the many pools remain untapped. And oh, the treasures that are hidden in these unshared and unrevealed experiences! What have our matured saints to tell us of the things we wish to know? How did they escape the snare, or by what subtlety were they fatally beguiled? How did they take the hill, and where did they discover the springs of refreshing? What did they find to be the best footgear when the gradient was steep, and how did they comfort their hearts when they dug the grave by the way? And what is it like to grow old, and what delicacies does the Lord of the road provide for aged pilgrims, and have they seen any particular and wonderful stars in their evening sky? Are not all of us unspeakably poorer because these counsels and inspirations are untold? And our younger communicants—how are they faring on the new and arduous road? What unsuspected difficulties are they meeting? And what unsuspected provisions

have they received? And what privilege of service has been given them, and what inspiring vision have they found in the task? And what have our stalwart warriors to tell us? How goes the fight in the business fields, on market and exchange? And what hidden secret has the Lord of light been unveiling to the ordained layman? What wealth of truth and glory? I say, these are breadths of the κοινωνία we do not traverse, these are mines we do not work, and the output of our moral and spiritual energy is consequently small. I know the perils which abound in these particular regions of exercised communion. Those who have the least to say may be the readiest to speak. The spiritually insolvent may rise and talk like spiritual millionaires. The bloom of a delicate reserve may be destroyed, and flippant witnessing may become a substitute for deep experience. Easy familiarity may be made the standard of spiritual attainment, and sensational statements may be engendered by the hotbeds of vanity and pride. In a fellowship-meeting some members may speak from a subtle love of applause, while others may speak from an equally illicit sense of shame. I know all this, but I know also that there is nothing in the entire round of Christian worship and communion which is not exposed to abomination and abuse. There is not a single plant in your garden which is not the gathering-ground of some particular pest; ay, and the more delicate and tender the plant, the more multitudinous are the foes. But you do not banish

the plant because of the pests; you accept the plant and guard against the pests; and I for one think it not impossible to cultivate this larger, richer, more social and familiar fellowship, and at the same time to create an atmosphere in which these invasive perils shall be unable to breathe. Under God, everything depends upon your leader; and under God, cannot wise leaders be grown?—leaders who shall be able, with a rare delicacy of tact, born of deep and unceasing communion with God, to draw out the individual gift of witness and experience, and by the accumulated treasure to enrich the entire Church. Our Church is comparatively poor and unimpressive; here is a storehouse of untouched resources which I am convinced would immeasurably enrich and strengthen our equipment in our combined attack against the powers of darkness. We need to get higher up the mountains. And we need, too, to get further out upon the plains. "O, for a closer walk with God!" And "O, for a closer walk with man!" Closer to the great and holy God, that we may be possessed by a deepening and fertilising awe; and closer to our brother, that we may move in the manifold inspiration and comfort of "mutual faith" and experience.

I have not been concerned with the suggestion of new expedients. It has not been my purpose to advocate or defend aggressive and unfamiliar enterprises. My eyes have not been upon the Church's conduct, but upon her character: not upon her pro-

spectus, but upon her capital: not upon her plan of campaign, but upon her fighting strength. "Like a mighty army moves the Church of God!" Yes, but does she? Are not her regiments sometimes almost Falstaffian in their bedraggled impotence? How shall she increase her fighting power? How shall she enrich her spirit of discipline? And I have answered, By taking thought of the untrodden heights and the untrodden breadths within her own circle, by claiming her purposed and buried resources in humanity and in God. I am convinced that in these ways we should make undreamt-of additions to the energy and impact of the Church's strength. No Church can walk along these unfrequented paths without acquiring the momenta of sacrificial grace: and when the power of the Church becomes awful and sacrificial, when she bears in her body the red "marks of the Lord Jesus," when there is "blood upon the lintel and the two side posts" of her door, you may be assured that the arrested multitude will come together, drawn by the mesmeric gravitation of her own irresistible strength. And not only strong shall the Church become, strong in unselfish daring and persistence, but because of the very robustness of her strength she shall be tender with an exquisitely delicate compassion. I have yielded to none in the advocacy of "the wooing note" in the ministry of the word, and with a growing and richer confidence I advocate it still. But there is the wooing note of a silly, simpering sentimentalism,

and there is the wooing note of strong and masculine men who have been cradled and moulded and homed in the austere nursery and school of the mountains. And where can you make your fine wooers if not among the deepening ministries of the mountains? "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of them that bring glad tidings!" I shall have no fear about the strength and sweetness of the wooing note when we are all the children of the heights.

Given these conditions, and I believe the Church will move among the alienated multitudes with an illumined and fascinating constraint. The alienation of the people is not fundamental and ultimate. Deep down, beneath all the visible severances, there are living chords of kinship, ready to thrill and to respond to the royal note. Those living chords—buried if you will beneath the dead and deadening crust of formality and sin, buried, but buried alive—are to be found in Belgravia, where Henry Drummond, that man of the high mountains and the broad plains, awoke them to response by the strong, tender impact of a great evangel and a great experience. And those living chords are also to be found at the pit's mouth, among the crooked and pathetic miners, and they become vibrant with responsive devotion, as Keir Hardie has told us that his became vibrant, in answer to the awakening sweep of the strong, tender hands of the Nazarene. The multitude is not sick of Jesus; it is only sick of His feeble and bloodless representatives. When

once again a great Church appears, a Church with the Lord's name in her forehead, a Church with fine muscular limbs and face seamed with the marks of sacrifice, the multitude will turn their feet to the way of God's commandments. I sat a little while ago in one of the chambers of the National Gallery, and my attention was caught by the vast miscellaneous crowd as it sauntered and galloped through the rooms. All sorts and conditions of people passed by—rich and poor, the well-dressed and the beggarly, students and artisans, soldiers and sailors, maidens just out of school and women bowed and wrinkled in age: but, whoever they were, and however unarresting may have been all the other pictures in the chamber, every single soul in that mortal crowd stopped dead and silent before a picture of our Saviour bearing His cross to the hill. And when the Church is seen to be His body—His very body: His lips, His eyes, His ears, His hands, His feet, His brain, His heart: His very body—and when the Church repeats, in this her corporate life, the brave and manifold doings of Judæa and Galilee, she too shall awe the multitude, and by God's grace she shall convert the pregnant wonder into deep and grateful devotion.

Our times are disturbed, and hopefully and fruitfully disturbed, by vast and stupendous problems. On every side the latch is lifting, and the door of opportunity stands ajar. But we shall fail in our day, as other men have failed in their day, unless by

faith and experience we enter into "the fellowship of His sufferings," and become clothed with "the power of His resurrection." Sound social economics are not enough; sound political principles are not enough; sound creeds and politics are not enough. The most robust and muscular principle will faint and grow weary unless it is allied with character which is rendered unique and irresistible by unbroken communion with the mind and will of God. It is "*Christ in us*" which is "*the hope of glory,*" both for the individual and the State.

Let us abide in Him in total and glorious self-abandonment. Let nothing move us from our rootage. Let us "pray without ceasing," and let our consecration be so complete and confident that there may be presented unto the world a Church "alive unto God"; a Church as abounding in signs of vitality as hedgerows in the spring; a Church quickened in moral vision, in intellectual perception, in emotional discernment; a Church acute, compassionate and daring, moving amid the changing circumstances of men in the very spirit of her Lord, and presenting everywhere the arresting ministry of "a hiding-place from the wind, a covert from the tempest, rivers of water in a dry place, and the shadow of a great rock in a weary land!"

II

THE WONDERS OF REDEMPTION

"I have been crucified with Christ; yet I live; and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me; and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me."—GAL. ii. 20.

What shall we do with this passage? How shall we approach it? Shall we come to it as guests or as controversialists, as suppliants or as combatants? The fiercest action at Waterloo was fought round about a farm, where the fruits were ripening in the orchard, and the fields were mellowing for the harvest. The farmstead was treated as a battle-field, and the ploughshares were beaten into swords, and the pruning hooks were converted into spears, and the blowing corn was trampled in the gory clay. And here, too, is a farmstead, and the fruit hangs ripe upon the branches, and the corn is yellow for the harvest. How then? Shall we make it a sort of Waterloo, or shall we walk with our Lord in the garden "at the cool of the day"? I would approach it as a guest and not as a soldier. I come to feast and not to fight. I would "sit down under the shadow," and His fruit shall be "sweet unto my taste." Behind the familiar words of my text there are tremendous experiences, the secrets of which lead us into the innermost sanctuary of the hallowed

love and grace of God. And therefore I say I would rather sing the song of the harvest-home than the song of any victor whose ecclesiastical enemy lies prone upon the bloody field. Survey the field! *"Who loved me and gave Himself for me."* There we have the passion of redemption. *"I am crucified with Christ, yet I live."* There we have the mystery of re-creation. *"I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God."* There we have the secret of appropriation. Such is this Scriptural farmstead in whose over-flowing fields and barns it is our privilege to make our home.

Here, then, is *the passion of redemption.* "The Son of God who loved me, and gave Himself for me." But at once notice an obtrusion which so many of our modern thinkers seem to resent. "Who *loved* me." That is neurotic, and we prefer the philosophic. It is sentimental, and we prefer the mental. The light is too glaring, too sensational, too perfervid, too sunny, and we prefer the cooler and less exciting radiance of the moon. "Who *loved* me." The emotions are stealing into the mind, like a moist Alpine mist rising from the vale, and mixing itself with the light of common day, and many moderns resent the combination. They regard the ministry of emotion as deflecting the judgment; they prefer desiccated light, dry light, light which is absolutely proof against the invasion of sentiment and tears.

And so there are two processes at work. First,

there is the de-sentimentalising of the religious life. We shy at sentiment as we should shy at known poison. We are loud in proclaiming the perils of an emotional religion, and we are busy draining away the emotion and leaving the religion hard and dry. And because we de-sentimentalise there is a correlative process, and we de-personalise. Personal love is transformed into diffused energy, the ministering angels become established laws, delicate intimacies are regarded as the interaction of psychic forces, the personal pronouns become abstract nouns, the personal movement in the verb becomes a mere current of the cosmos in which the sacredness of individuality is entirely lost. Here is a contrast which I will present to you as indicating this particular peril of our time. On the one hand, "Where two or three are gathered together in My name there am I in the midst of them." And on the other hand, "The psychic forces are ubiquitous and communion is established by pure volition."

Well, is not all this very thin, and attended by infinite peril? We all recognise the dangers of an emotional piety, but there are almost equally great dangers in a piety from which emotion is entirely banished. A perfectly dry eye is blind, and a perfectly dry religion has no sight. We always have the clearest vision when there's moisture in the air, and a wise personal sentiment has its appointed place in the vision of God, and in the creation of a fruitful intercourse between the soul and Him. The

personal and the emotional have had their prominent ministry in the lives of all conspicuous saints. It is certainly true of Paul; the sentence in my text is typical of many more. "Who loved me and gave Himself for me!" "Weigh diligently," says Martin Luther, "every word of Paul, and especially mark well his pronouns . . . wherein also there is ever some vehemency and power." And it is all equally true of Luther himself. Take his great commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians, and you will find that although it is so martial in its mood, and so severely and consistently polemical, yet the personal emphasis is rarely absent, and the emotions are frequently stirred like the brimming fulness of the spring tides. Even Calvin himself becomes emotional, and a tender sentiment lies upon his thought, like the dews upon the open moors, when he contemplates the wonders of redeeming grace. If we have ever been tempted to think of Calvin as hard and dry and rigid, more a herbalist than a gardener, with the scheme of his thought stretching over his life like a rainless sky, a man devoid of sentiment and incapable of tears—if such has been our thought of Calvin, let us accompany him through the Epistle to the Ephesians, and we shall discover how the merely theological becomes the devotional, how the severely controversial becomes the worshipful, how argument breaks into rapture, and how restrained emotion bursts its dykes, and the man's adoration becomes moist with grateful tears. It is all equally

true of another man, nearer to our own time, who is not eclipsed even when set in the radiant succession of Calvin and Luther and Paul. There is nothing more characteristic of Spurgeon than the personal emphasis, the daring use of the pronouns, and the rich, full sentiment that ever plays about his contemplations of the grace and love of his Lord. The greatest wonder in the two worlds of heaven and earth he says is this, that "He loved me, and gave Himself for me!" "It rings like marriage bells in the heart! Not all the harps of heaven can sound out sweeter music than this, when the Holy Spirit speaks it to my soul, 'The Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.'" That is the grateful sentiment of a strong man, and these are all strong men, giants along the pilgrim way, and they never attempt to denude their piety of emotion or to de-personalise their religious life. They are great in the use of the pronouns, and great in the flow of tender yearning and desire, and their reason is all the more masculine, and their will is all the more massive because they do not deny the native rights of the heart. And all I wish to add is this, let us beware lest, in a healthy recoil from a wishy-washy sentimentalism, which pays little homage to the reason, we too "enter into life maimed," by adopting a desiccated rationalism, which dries up the very sap of piety, and drains away that fine emotion which is absolutely requisite to the finer issues of our faith.

Now turn to the apostle's personal glorying in the ministry of redemption. "He loved me, and gave Himself for me." And what was the purpose of the Lord's redemption? Humanity lay in a dire and awful bondage. There was the fearful appetite for sin. There was the relentless claim of violated law. There was the nemesis of guilt. There was the power of the devil. There was the clutch of superstition. And there was death and the fear of death. That was the bondage. And the Lover loved the bondslave, and the glorious crusade of the Lover was by love to bring "deliverance to the captive, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." "He *loved.*" Just there a false sentiment is born. Now love is holy. At the very heart of infinite love is incorruptible holiness, and in that innermost holiness lie the purpose and promise of our redemption. "O give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness!" But it is just here that false sentiment is born—that mawkish, effeminate, relaxing sentiment from which strong men recoil. There is a sentimentalism which bows before no shrine of virgin flame, and its morals are always lackadaisical, and its scheme of redemption is always cheap. It conceives love as a pretty rainbow, and not as "a rainbow round about the throne." It gathers a handful of flowers on the lower slopes of the mountains, but never ranges above the snow-line, amid the awe-inspiring, breath-gripping solitudes of the eternal snows. Yes, that is the obtrusive contrast between

sentiment and sentimentalism. Sentimentalism is born among the flowers: a noble sentiment is born among the snows. Sentimentalism is born among graces: sentiment is born amid grace. Sentimentalism moves easily among kindnesses: sentiment moves wonderingly amid holiness. And therefore, I say, sentimentalism is inherently mawkish, while true sentiment is inherently austere. Sentimentalism takes liberties, while "the fear of the Lord is clean." When, therefore, I hear the evangel, "He loved me," I know that the glorious ministry is born of holiness: love is holiness in exercise, it is holiness in gracious movement, it is "a river of water of life proceeding out of the throne of God and the Lamb." Our Lover is holy, and holy is His love. "He loved me!"—the unholy and the unclean.

And because love is holy, love is inconceivably *sensitive*. The unhallowed is the insensitive, for sin is ever the minister of benumbment. Yes, the unclean makes the moral powers numb, and after every sin the sensitiveness is dulled, and life's responsiveness impaired. The gradient of purity is also the gradient of feeling: they advance or retrograde with equal steps. And therefore it is impossible for us to realise, even remotely, the sensitiveness of holiness, and therefore, again, our Saviour's sorrows are inconceivable. "Was ever sorrow like unto my sorrow?" "He trod the winepress alone." Holy love is infinitely sensitive, and "He loved me, and gave Himself for me."

And because holy love is sensitive, holy love is *redemptive.* Holiness is ever positive and aggressive, seeking by its own "consuming fire" to burn the hateful germs of sin. We may test our growth in holiness, not by our cloistered recoil from uncleanness, but by our positive action upon it. Holiness is not secretive, exclusive, but sanative and redemptive. It takes live coals from its altar-fires wherewith to purge the lips of the defiled. A negative holiness is as monstrous as a square circle, or a heatless fire. "He shall baptise you with the Holy Ghost and with fire, and ye shall be . . ." Which just means this: holy love shall be an eager servant in the ministry of a positive redemption. And so "He loved me," He saw me in my low estate, and in His holiness He sought my holiness and my everlasting peace.

"He loved me, and *He gave Himself for me.*" For holy, sensitive, redemptive love must of necessity be sacrificial. It is the very genius of holiness to be superlative, and in its sacrificial ministry it sacrifices self. *"He gave Himself for me!"* Will my readers wonder if I say that John Calvin, in his marvellous exposition of this epistle, devotes only half-a-dozen lines to an attempted interpretation of this phrase? And what is the reason? Why, this. That the great theologian lays down his pen in glorious, but overwhelming and impotent bewilderment! "No words," he says, "can properly express what this means; for who can find language to declare the

excellency of the Son of God?" And so, I say, he just lays downs his pen, and contemplates the glory in speechless wonder! "He gave Himself for me!" He endued Himself with the robe of flesh, He entered the house of bondage, He took upon Him the form of a bondslave that He might set the bondslave free. He walked the pilgrim path of limitation, the path of sorrow and temptation; face to face He met the devil, face to face He met "the terror feared of man," becoming "obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." "He gave Himself for me!" And in that holy sacrifice of love the holy law of God received perfect obedience, the violated law of God received a holy satisfaction, the sovereignty of the devil was smitten and overthrown, boastful death lost its sting, and the omnivorous grave its victory! "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" And *He* did it all, did it all! "Wilt thou bring *thy* cowl, thy shaven crown, thy chastity, thy purity, thy works, thy merits?" He did it all! Says Luther, "Paul had nothing in his mouth but Christ."

"Nothing in my hands I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling."

"He loved me and gave Himself for me." Such is the passion of redemption.

Now let me pass to the secret of appropriation. "*That life which I now live I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God.*" And so the virtues of

the love-sacrifice are to become mine by faith, for by faith I become incorporated with the triumphant Lord. Yes, but what is faith? It is not the deliberate blinding of the judgment. It is not tremulous movement in a small, fusty room, in which the casement window is studiously kept shuttered, and in which we make a pious vow never to open the lattice, and let in the morning light and air. Now is faith the dethronement of the reason, and the coronation of caprice? It is not "the shutting of the eyes," and "the opening of the mouth," in unillumined expectation. Faith is reasonable dealing in reasonable things. Faith is in the science of religion what experiment is in the science of matter. Faith is reasonable experiment with the glorious hypotheses of Christ. We begin with hypotheses, we discover truth. But in the Christian religion all the hypotheses centre round about the Saviour Himself, and therefore personal faith is personal dealing with Christ, faith is trust, experiment is communion, exploration is by consecration, knowledge is by homage; we lose our life and we find it again in our Lord. Faith, therefore, is not finally mental, or emotional, but volitional. Faith is ultimately an act of the will: it is the personal surrender of the life to the governance of the Saviourhood of Christ. It is the human side of the marriage-covenant between the Lamb and the Lamb's bride. Faith is the human end of the ministry which establishes union between the soul and its Lord. "We are

justified by faith." "That life which I now live I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." Such is the secret of appropriation.

So far for the passion of redemption, and the secret of appropriation: and now, thirdly, the wonders of re-creation. What are to be the issues of the union, according to the teachings of my text? First of all, there is to be a certain *mortification*: "I am crucified with Christ." "The apostle speaketh," says one who is greatly at home in the affairs of the heart, "of that high crucifying, whereby sin, the devil and death are crucified in Christ, and not in me . . . But I, believing in Christ, am by faith crucified also with Christ, so that all these things are crucified and dead unto me." Ay, and that not fictionally, but in sober and most literal truth. One of the gifts of redemption is a certain deadness; there is a dead side to a true believer: on that side, while he believes, his senses do not operate, and he offers no response. Have I not seen it scores upon scores of times? Have I not seen a believer, who by belief has become one with Christ, and who has become dead to the old baneful world of haunting guilt? Did I not hear one say, who had revelled forty years in sin, and who had become united with the Lord, that that forty-year-old man was dead, "crucified with Christ," and if any accusing day should shake a threatening finger at him, he would laugh in triumph, the finger was pointed at the dead,

for that particular man "was crucified, dead and buried, and his life was hid with Christ in God!" And have I not seen a believer, who by belief has become one with Christ, and who has become dead to the insidious fascination of a glittering and destructive world? "Good-bye, proud world, I'm going home!" And have I not seen a believer, who by belief has become one with Christ, and who has become dead to death, and in death has exulted in "the power of an endless life." Oh, yes, one of the primary gifts of grace is the gift of deadness—deadness to the threat of yesterday, deadness to the fear of tomorrow, deadness to the frown of the immediate circumstance, and deadness to majestic death itself! "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." "*I have been crucified with Christ.*" "I *died.*"

But there are other fruits of the union which is humanly established by faith in Christ. "I have been crucified with Christ": mortification; "*yet I live*": vitalisation! "If we died with Him, we shall also live with Him!" The gift of deadness is the companion gift of vitality. "Everything shall live whither the river cometh." Dormant powers shall be aroused and shall troop forth out of their graves, powers of holy perception, and holy desire, and holy sympathy, and holy faculty for service. And old powers shall be renewed, and they shall be like anæmic weaklings who have attained a boisterous vitality. Our powers are far from their best until they become united to Christ. I saw a

bit of edelweiss the other day growing in a garden in one of our suburbs; but it had to be labelled, it was so unlike its masculine kinsman gripping the desolate precipices of the lofty Alps. Ay, you must see the edelweiss at home! And if we want to see what love really is, and will, and conscience, and chivalry, we must see them at home, in their native clime, rooted and grounded in the life and love of the eternal Lord. "In Christ shall all be made alive."

"I have been crucified with Christ: yet I live: *and yet no longer I, but Christ . . .!*" So that is where we arrive. Mortification by Christ, vitalisation in Christ, *the manifestation of Christ.* "I live, yet no longer I." What is that but the suppression of the ego? Would it not be better to say, What is that but the conversion and transfiguration of the ego, and the emergence of the Lord? "No longer I, Christ liveth in me!" The Lord who pervades the life also dominates it. "The life which I now live in the flesh" reveals His power and His glory. He takes my humble affairs and He uses them as the shrine of His own Presence, the lampstand for His own eternal light. The life in the home, in the market, in the school, in the senate, in the closet, in the polling-booth,—the entire circuit of that life "which I now live in the flesh," "I live in faith!" "I live, yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me." That is the Christian ideal, and that is the Christian possibility, however pitiably remote

we may be from its attainment. Yes, that is the ideal, that Christ lives again in me, that my activities are the motions of my Lord; that in me He faces again the Pharisee, in me He denounces again the oppressor of "the poor and him that hath no helper," in me He ministers again to the hungry, the paralysed, and the fever-stricken, and in me He champions again the cause of the Magdalene and the little child. "I live, yet no longer I, but *Christ.*" Men shall gaze upon the issues of the life, and say, "It is the Lord!" and they shall glorify our Father which is in heaven.

III

THE LOVE OF GOD

I am not going to argue about it, I seek to enjoy it. I am not going to prove it, but to proclaim it. We will not discuss the *menu,* but sit down to the feast. For the soul is so subtly tempted to spend in controversy what ought to be used in appropriation. It is surely well that we should frequently put aside our attempted analyses of the bread of life, and should "taste and see how gracious the Lord is." We must not always be in the laboratory; the laboratory is useless unless we meet the Lord as guests, and feed upon the rich provisions of His table. And therefore my purpose is a very simple one, however difficult it may be of achievement. It is to attempt to vivify that most tremendous commonplace, "God loves you." If we could be sure of that, and live in it, the assurance would be a strange minister of personal redemption. It would give firmness to our thinking, nobility to our feeling, buoyancy to our steps, and it would transform the spirit of mourning into the habits of praise.

"God loves you!" How shall I think about it? There are those who tell us we can form no conception of it. It belongs to a realm and climate which we have never traversed, and which are quite un-

known. We can no more realise it than we can realise the boundless stretches of forest in the mid-west of America from the possession of a pineneedle, or the splendours of its gorgeous canyons from a square inch of coloured stone, or its multitudinous bird-life from one feather of a songster's wing. Things are so vastly different in range and profundity between the human and the Divine that we cannot safely reason from one to the other. Well, if that be so, all pretended revelation of God is a mockery and a delusion. We may as well cast it out as rubbish to the void, we may as well close the doors and windows of our minds and make our judgments blind. Not so do I accept our position. I have no sympathy with those who disparage the nobilities of human life in order to magnify the nobility of God. We do not magnify His beauty by deliberately calling our own beautiful things ugly. We do not glorify the love of God by treating a pure mother's love as tinselled jewellery, or as seedy and unworthy moral attire. We must reason from the best we know to what exists in God. And, therefore, quietly and confidently I accept the best and the fairest in human love as my implement, however poor it be, in my exploration of the glorious love of God. Human love is not as a dead feather, plucked from a dead bird, in its relation to the grandeur of a continent. It is a songster itself, and filling the air with song. Human love is not a bit of the furniture of the Homeland, it is a veritable bit of its life.

When, therefore, I want to think of the love of God, I do not reject the helpful suggestion of human motherhood, and fatherhood, and wifehood, and husbandhood, and childhood. Nay, rather do I listen to their music all the more eagerly, and in their love-strains I hear "sweet snatches of the songs above," faint echoes of the wonderful love of God. No, the love of our Father in heaven is not altogether unlike the love of all good fathers on earth. It is very like and yet very unlike; so like as to be akin, so unlike that it fills us with adoring wonder and praise; so like, as the vast organ and the harmonium are akin, and can express the same tune: so unlike that, as with the organ and the harmonium, one overwhelms the other in range and capacity, in height and depth, in length and breadth of musical glory. "God loves you," and you have heard a bit of the tune in your mother's love, in your father's love, in the love of your husband, in the love of your wife, in the love of your little child. Human love may be only as a child's earliest broken song in comparison with the Hallelujah Chorus, but it is akin. "Now Jonathan loved David;" "God loves thee."

If that be so, the Bible encourages us to think in a great and magnificent way of this love of God, of which we catch faint strains in human-kind. Let us remind ourselves how we are encouraged to think about it.

First of all, then, we are taught to think that God's love is the most *real* thing in the universe. What

are the real things in the universe, the things that veritably abide? In other days men spake of the unchanging heavens and the everlasting hills. But even while they used the figure of speech, in their very hearts they knew that the very thing which had provided the symbol was in a state of flux and was passing away. Concerning those very heavens they said, "As a vesture shalt Thou roll them up, and they shall be changed." Concerning those very hills they said, "At Thy presence they melt away." Yes, even the things which provide our symbols of the permanent are themselves fading away. But the transiency of the material needs no emphasis. "Change and decay in all around I see." We have only to return to the home of our childhood and look upon the broken circle of our friends; nay, to revisit a place after an absence of ten years gives us a startling revelation of the silent ravages of destructive time. It is certainly not in the material realm that we find the real and the permanent. Our painfully accumulated riches "take to themselves wings and fly away." Where, then, shall we look for the real? Not again in human disposition. Even the noblest strains are fickle and broken. The songster is the victim of caprice, and has his silent moods. Discords afflict the harmony; sometimes the noblest music is like jangled bells, "out of tune and harsh." Where, then, shall we look for it? In "the love of God." There is nothing transitory about it, nothing fickle, nothing capricious, nothing shadowy,

nothing unreal. God's love abides, the permanent background in the moving play. We cannot awake and find it absent; and while we sleep it never steals away. It is the most real thing in the universe. It never changes; and God loves thee. "I have loved thee with an everlasting love."

And then we are taught to think that God's love is the *biggest* thing in the universe. Let us think of some of the biggest things we know, and then we will lift our eyes upon one that is bigger than all. Well, first of all, there is sin. Take up the newspaper in these days when everything is dragged into a glaring publicity, when nothing is allowed to remain veiled or concealed. Read the accounts from the police-courts, or sometimes worse still, read the police-work done by the newspaper itself. Let the hideousness pile itself before our gaze. Then add to it the sin, often the blacker sin, of which the police can take no account. Think of the vice which is clever enough to keep within the circle of legal virtue. Think of the indecency which does not become obscenity. Think of the unfairness which does not break the law of theft. Think of the well-trimmed or suggestive gossip which guards itself from the law of libel. Think of the insinuations which are not indictments, and the enmity which is not scandal. Again, let the hideousness pile itself up like a mountain! Then let us go into our own heart. Firmly examine the range of our own sinfulness. Note the extent of our corruption. Mark

how the rottenness infests some of our presumably finest fruit. Then exercise the imagination upon similar maladies in the lives of others; and then let the burdened imagination roam scout-like around the world. Again, I say, let the hideousness accumulate pile upon pile! What then? God's love is bigger still! Nay, God's Book declares that human sin, amazing and gigantic as it is, yet, when compared with God's love it is as a stone dropped in the immeasurable sea! "Where sin abounds grace doth much more abound." And that God loves thee and me! Yes, bring out the big things: His love is bigger, even as the Himalayas tower above the rolling hills on the plain. Here is a big thing in itself, human hatred. Do we know anything deeper than malicious hatred? The hatred of an Iago, or of a Pharisee for the Christ? Think of the hate which at this very hour, in all this land of ours, is pursuing its dark, subterranean work, devising ministries of mischief, plotting bloody tragedies of revenge, while in the open day it wears the garb of a gracious friend and an angel of light. A deep thing! Ay, deep indeed. Do we know a deeper? Only one, the love of God!

> "O love of God, how deep and great!
> Far deeper than man's deepest hate,
> Self-fed, self-kindled, like the light
> Changeless, eternal, infinite."

His love is the biggest of all big things. And that God loves thee and me.

And, thirdly, we are taught to think that the love of God is the most *personal,* the most individual thing in the universe. Our God loves everybody as though each one were everybody and there were no one else to share it. God's love is not a vague, diffused sentiment, like a senseless, enveloping air, enclosing us all in an undiscerning embrace. God's love is a conscious, intelligent, purposeful relationship, not concerned with a human abstraction called the world, but with individual men and women. If I may reverently say it, the word "masses" could never be in the Divine vocabulary; not "masses," but "children," not "race," but "family," not "my world," but "my child." That is the superlative wonder in the altogether wonderful evangel of grace—that the Divine love can concentrate on everybody, as though, I say, each one were everybody, and there was only one child in the Father's house. And so it was altogether fitting, because altogether true, that the Apostle Paul dared to appropriate the evangel to his own heart and life, and to sing with blessed triumph, "He loved me, and gave Himself for me!" And you and I can sing it; and you and I ought to sing it. "He loved me, and gave Himself for me!" And we ought to teach our children to sing it, and the children of the stranger, and prodigal men and women who are far out of the way. "He loved me, and gave Himself for me." For it is a great moment, a solemn moment, greater and more solemn than the day of birth, or the day of marriage,

or the day of death—greater and more solemn than all, when the soul becomes aware and assured of the love of God, and sings as she goes, "He loved me, and gave Himself for me." Yes, God's love is the most personal, the most individual thing in the world, hungrily seeking out persons to laden them with sacred treasure, hungrily seeking out you to bring the sacred treasure to you. God's love is personal, far more personal than your love for your child, even though you have only one; and God loves you and me.

And I turn to the Book again, and I am taught that the love of God is the most *sacrificial* thing in the universe. Again let the eyes look round in quest of the finest human love engaged in holy sacrifice. Think of a mother and her frail and fragile child. Think of a wife pouring out sacrificial love upon a dissolute husband, or a husband pouring out sacrificial love upon his dissolute wife. Think of fatherhood searching highways and byways for a prodigal son, or a son scouring the dreary hills for a prodigal father. Think of miners risking life in sacrificial service. Think of all the radiant instances of glorious chivalry which so often shine upon our common life. Think of them! Exalt them! And then think that we are taught that in comparison with the sacrificial love of God these are only faint and dim. The very love we have is borrowed fire, a live coal from the altar-fires of God. And our love, beautiful as it is, altogether gracious and glorious as it is, surpassingly precious as it is,

is only as the genial fire on the hearthstone compared with the voluminous and overwhelming splendour of the blazing sun. He is "the Father of all mercies, and the God of all comfort," living in love, living to love, delighting in sacrifice, withholding nothing from His children, "for He that spared not His only Son, but freely offered Him for us all, how shall He not with Him freely give us all things?"

And, lastly, we are taught to think of the love of God as the *holiest* thing in the universe. God's love is inconceivably pure, so pure that the newly-fallen snow offers but a dim and sullied emblem of its glory. And just because God's love is holy it aspires after holy ends. It is hungry for the loved ones to be holy too. It thinks less of pain than it does of sin. And, therefore, it may resort to pain to get rid of sin. Holy love is not afraid of discipline, not afraid to wound if it may the more effectually heal. Holy love prefers to reprove rather than to neglect, to make the soul suffer rather than permit it to die. It is only when love loses its fires that its attentions become indifferent. The love of God abides, and while a single stain defiles His child the gracious crusade of holiness will persist. Just because God's love is holy His loved ones will one day stand by "the sea of glass," "clothed in white robes, and palms in their hands," having gotten the victory over death and sin. And this holy God loves thee and me.

So lift up your hearts, the Lord loves you! This love of God, the most real thing in the universe, and the biggest, and the most personal, and the most sacrificial, and the most holy, rests upon you. Respond to it! Rejoice in it! Live and die in it.

"O love that will not let me go,
I rest my weary soul on Thee;
I give Thee back the life I owe,
That in Thine ocean depths its flow
May richer, fuller be!"

IV.

THE MAGNETISM OF THE UPLIFTED LORD

"I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me."—JOHN xii. 32.

The context gives us the needful illumination to see our way. *"Now there were certain Greeks among those that went up to worship at the feast: these therefore came to Philip . . . and asked him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus."* The personality of Jesus was already becoming attractive, the magnet was beginning to draw, the sons and daughters were coming from afar! But why were these Greeks drawn unto Him? Perhaps it was only curiosity, which nevertheless is often the mother of wonder and awe, and the minister of deathless devotion. Or, perhaps it was heart-hunger, the pangs of unsatisfied craving, an unrest which philosophy was unable to soothe, a vastness of desire for which eloquence, and music, and art had no bread. "Sir, we would see Jesus!" *"Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: Andrew cometh, and Philip, and they tell Jesus."* And what will Jesus say when this first little group of enquirers from the outer world are at His door? *"And Jesus said, The hour is come, that the Son of Man should be glorified!"*

Here is the beginning of the glory He seeks, the drawing of all men unto Him. Here is the little band of advance scouts which precede a host which no man can number. But this little company is only like a small handful of precocious blades of corn upon an otherwise barren field. They are almost before their time. Before the entire field can be covered with the promising verdure there must be a winter, and in the secret virtue of that winter shall the spring and autumn glory be found. First a winter, and then, not a few straggling blades, but an uncounted number! Even now there is a little movement, some faint stirring of aspiring life, but wait until winter has added its mystic ministry, and the movement will be as the silent march of a vast army. Even now Jesus draws men. But wait until the winter is passed! First, let Jesus die! "If it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me." The tendency of this little handful of Greeks shall become the drift of the race.

And so the magnet is to be the Lord Jesus in the wonderful energies of His transcendent sacrifice. "I, if I be lifted up." "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up." No one can really feel the pressing mystery of the cross who does not enter it possessed by the conviction of the sinlessness of Jesus, and realising something of the vast range of consciousness in which His spirit moved; His sense

of the absolute oneness of Himself and God; His unwavering sense of the voluntariness of His surrender to the powers of men and the pains of earth, "No man taketh it from Me"; His expressed consciousness, that, by the raising of the eyes, He could call to His aid legions of attendant forces which would make Him invincible; His calm assurance that "all things had been given into His hands," His submission to the cross in that assurance; all these remove His death from the ranks of common martyrdom, and place Him in an awful and glorious isolation. His martyr Stephen was forced into death: Jesus walked into it. From the very beginning His steps were set towards it. "He set His face steadfastly to go," and with an irresistible stride He paced forward to the self-chosen consummation of sacrifice. He descended the entire slope of sacrifice, from grade to grade, until He touched death, and destroyed the power of death, until He tore out death's sting, which is sin, and in one supreme victory triumphed over both.

Now, our Lord declares that it is in the energy of that transcendent sacrifice that His personal magnetism is to be found. The energy of His love as displayed in His life, compared with the energy of His love as displayed in His death, is as dispersed sunshine compared with focussed sunshine, sunshine concentrated in a burning heat. And it is this focussed sacrificial energy of His death, "The last pregnant syllable of God's great utterance of love,"

which our Lord declares is to be the ministry of attraction, by which all men are to be drawn unto Him. This teaching is not altogether strange, not altogether removed from the proof of human experience. Even upon the plane of common life, among men of narrow consciousness and sinful habit, the element of sacrifice is strangely magnetic, and allures the interest and admiration of men. We recall how the young Prince of the Netherlands, alien and unpopular, estranged from the people's hearts, drew the people to him by the energies of sacrifice. And we recall the heroic skipper, who by a midnight sacrifice drew to him the homage of kings and the affectionate acclamation of the race. Yes, and sometimes a notoriously bad man is kindled into some conspicuous act of heroic sacrifice, and in the tremendous energy of the pure flame his unworthiness seems consumed, and his infamy is forgotten. So that we are familiar with the magnetism of sacrifice even amid our own defiled and narrow lives. But what shall be the energies when the sacrificial being is the sinless Lord Himself, with strength to confront everything and never be defiled, with power to break the double tyranny of sin and death—what shall be the energy, its quantity and its quality, when He shall go "without the camp," to suffer and to die? "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me." The energies of that self-sacrificing Redeemer constitute the mightiest magnet known among men.

There is nothing like that magnet. Test it by

the individual testimony. As a matter of common experience, what draws men like the uplifted Lord? You must have noticed, as I again and again have noticed, how a silent awe steals over an assembly, when the preacher consciously approaches the cross, and leads the contemplation to that stupendous sacrifice. If he turn to matters ecclesiastical, political, æsthetical, educational, the tension is relaxed, and we can assume an attitude of easy detachment. It is the uplifted Lord who tightens the strings, and makes us mentally and spiritually tense, and draws us to our knees. What has experience to tell us of His wonderful workings? It tells us this, that nothing so overcomes the deathly and the deadly in man as "the preaching of Jesus Christ and Him crucified." It breaks up the frozen indifference of men. It makes them graciously uneasy. It disturbs them with promising disquietude. It awakes moral pains by restoring the moral circulation, and it accomplishes resurrection through the pangs of hell and the sorrows of death. But the sacrificial Lord does more than inspire initial unrest. He converts the uneasy stirrings into definite spiritual movement. He not only breaks up inertia, He determines direction. He awakes men, and He also draws them. He draws men towards Himself, and they move to a close and personal communion. There is nothing else which works in that way, and to such swift and personal devotion. You may proclaim the Lord as a great ethical teacher, but the ethics may generate

no more energy than do the Ten Commandments painted upon the cold surface of the walls of a church. You may proclaim Him as a young reformer, but the programme will no more lift men out of their deadly grooves than a party programme will lift men out of their sins. Jesus, the young prophet, may draw cheers; the uplifted Lord draws men. The young Reformer may gain men's signatures; the sacrificial Saviour wins their hearts. "I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love."

> "Just as I am, without one plea,
> But that Thy blood was shed for me,
> And that Thou bid'st me come to Thee,
> O Lamb of God, I come!"

Test the energies of this magnet by the testimony of history as to what is the power which has most conspicuously swayed great masses of mankind. Whenever the multitudes have been profoundly moved, whenever stagnant peoples have been stirred into newness and freshness of life, it has been by the energies of the uplifted Lord. Let us confine the range of vision to our own country, and to our own country within the limited circle of the last hundred and fifty years. I am not aware of any vast upheaval of the national sentiment which has taken place within that season which was not directly occasioned by the energies of the uplifted Lord. What we call the Evangelical Revival carries its interpretation in its name. When the England of

the eighteenth century—so superficial, so cruel, so soddened in immoral indifference—began to move toward a cleaner and a sweeter and more enlightened life, the magnet that drew her was the Lamb of God. The miner in Cornwall and Northumbria, the workman in the potteries, the shepherd on the northern moors, the poor cotter in Scotland and in Ireland, all felt the pull of the magnet, and sped with eager feet toward their Lord. Let any one turn to John Wesley's journal, and read the inner story of that wonderful revival, and he will be in no doubt as to what was the quickening ministry that created it. From shepherd and fisherman and miner alike this was the common cry, "O Lamb of God, I come!" And it has not been otherwise in a nearer day. No one has ever moved the multitudes except the men with the magnet of the uplifted Lord. Nay, it is passing strange that only the men with the uplifted Lord seem to seek the multitudes at all! Have you known of any Moody, with similar passion and similar aim, but with another magnet than this of the crucified God, who has moved the masses of our countrymen, and drawn them into the holy paths of higher life and service? If such there be, I should like to know of them, for as yet they have never passed across my sight. No, when the multitudes are swayed, they are swayed by the Lamb. I am not now asking you to account for it, or to accept any theory concerning it, but to accept the plain testimony of experience, that some marvellous

magnetic energy attaches to the uplifted Lord, and that there is nothing to be named alongside it in its power to grip and draw the multitudes. With all my heart I believe in what Mr. Spurgeon said—and altogether apart from his supreme genius his own ministry afforded abundant proof—that there is nothing in this world which so impresses men, and nothing which at bottom they are so eager to hear, as just "the old, old story," told by men who know its power, "of Jesus and His love." That is where the Labour Church is most assuredly doomed to fail and to die, and many who are reading these words will live to see it.

"I, if I be lifted up, will draw *all* men unto Me." Then in the energies of this sacrificed Christ we are not only to find the dynamic of redemption, but the secret of human brotherhood. If men are drawn to Him they will be drawn nearer to one another. It will be like moving from the isolated suburbs of a great circumference down the many radii to a common centre, and as we approach that centre we shall draw near to one another. The central Magnet will communicate something of its own attractive energy to every approaching soul, and by the common energy shall souls be drawn together. The secret of brotherhood is found in common nearness to the Lord. But how dare I say that when I look round upon the Churches of to-day? Is there anything less like brotherhood than the spectacle which they present to the world? So far from being possessed

by some common energy of mutual attraction, we seem to be possessed by an energy which occasions mutual repulsion. If by some happy chance we find ourselves on a common platform, we either half apologise for our relationship, or we indulge in outbursts of mutual eulogy and surprise which reveal how infrequent and unreal is our communion. If it be true that by drawing near the centre we assuredly draw near to one another, what has happened to explain our position? This has happened: we have forgotten the Centre, or we have made centres of our own. We have made a theory a centre, a form of ecclesiastical government a centre, and because all men will not travel toward our self-made centre, there is antagonism and repulsion, and mutual throwing of stones, and the religion which was purposed to be a minister of brotherly union becomes the embittered agent of division and strife. But I tell you that wherever, in any and all denominations, men get their eyes clearly fixed upon the face of the sacrificial Lord, upon the uplifted Christ of God, they do most assuredly move and draw together, and these men, even at the present time, are living and working in co-operative service and in brotherly concord and peace. It is the man who strikes his spear and plants his standard in his own self-chosen and self-created centre, and who will not look beyond his formal creed, his rigid polity, and his fleshly succession, it is this man, wherever he may be found, who is the foe of human fellowship and Christian

intimacy, and who retards the gracious oneness for which our Saviour lived and bled and died. When we get our eager eyes fixed upon the Lord, the Lord uplifted in superlative sacrifice, when we pierce through every secondary medium, and contemplate the primary glory, we shall move down the different radii of our Church relationships—Episcopalian, Methodist, Congregationalist, Presbyterian, Friend—and we shall emerge in the fair light of the oneness of a common love, and in the full, sweet harmony of a common confession, "My Lord and my God!" "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me."

"I, if I be lifted up!" There is energy there to redeem us all. There is energy there to lift us out of the cold prison-house of guilt, out of the cruel tyranny of sin, out of the bitterness of death. "*I* will draw!" No one else can do it. "I," and this in contrast to "the prince of this world" in the previous verse. These are the combatants: "the prince of this world" versus the uplifted Lord! I place my reliance on the Lord! "Whosoever believeth on Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life."

"Drawn to the Cross which Thou hast blessed
With healing gifts for souls distressed,
To find in Thee my life, my rest,
Christ crucified, I come!"

"To be what Thou wouldst have me be,
Accepted, sanctified in Thee,
Through what Thy grace shall work in me,
Christ crucified, I come!"

V

SON AND HEIR!

"Thou art no longer a bondservant, but a son: and if a son, then an heir through God."—GAL. iv. 7.

"Son" and "heir"! So that is how our position and prospects are described! "Son and heir!" Would the world recognise our status when it looks upon us? I do not refer to such seasons as the time of a great convention, when our festive feelings are excited, and we move about with a certain gaiety of demeanour, and with buoyant and exuberant strides. In our festive moments we may have the royal carriage of sons and heirs, and we may be distinguished from the depressed and heavy-footed multitude. But how do we appear when the festivities are over, when the trumpet is silent, and the shouting dies, and the banners and the bunting are taken down, and the holiday attire is put away in the drawer, and we are back again on the old grey road, in the dusty workshop, in the monotonous office, behind the irritating counter, in the familiar drudgery of the humming school? How, then, when the world looks in upon us, and finds us in our everyday clothes, and when we are moving not to the martial music of a band, but to the click of a remorseless machine, do we appear like sons and heirs of God Almighty? Are there any signs about us of aristocratic breeding?

Do we betray the presence of royal blood? Is there something in our demeanour, subtle, impressive, influential, something which our clothes can never hide, and which abides through the gleaming hour of festivity, and through the long, grey stretch of the commonplace years? If we are of true blood, "blue blood," of royal lineage, "born . . . not of the will of man, but of God," there must be something about us emphatic and unique, which will fill the world with wonder. If we are "sons and heirs," the unbelieving world will remark upon the quality of our breeding, and upon the variety and fulness of our wealth. Men will whisper to one another about our most palpable acquisitions, and our most evident emancipation. They will speak in this wise: "They are no longer bondservants, moving about their ways with the feverish and restless timidity of a slave; they have something of the strong and lordly mien of the owner of the estate!" Is this the judgment of the world upon you and me? Do we reveal "blue blood," the Lord's aristocracy, or is there nothing about us to occasion notice or remark? Are we so at one with the colour and movement of the common crowd? Again I ask—is there anything kingly or queenly about our very walk and conversation? If we have the consciousness of sons and heirs, that consciousness will get into our faces, on to our lips, into our courtesies, into our handgrips, and there will be royal significance in all the issues of our life. But perhaps the consciousness is not present

and regnant in our lives. Perhaps we are Christians who have not yet claimed or even recognised our kingdom. Perhaps we are moving about in depression and poverty, and our vast inheritance lies untrodden and unexplored. Perhaps we are hugging the title-deeds, and we have never realised the unspeakable value of our land. Perhaps we have sat down on the inside of the gate, like a waiting slave, and we are not striding over the estate like the "son and heir." "Thou art no longer a bondservant but a son: and if a son, then an heir!" To some it has been said, in words of awful disillusionment, "Thou knowest not that thou art poor!" To others there may be equal need of the awaking and inspiring evangel, "Thou knowest not that thou art *rich!*" "Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art, northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: for all the land which thou seest to thee will I give it. . . . Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it: for I will give it unto thee." Thou art the son and heir.

I wonder where our impoverishment begins. Perhaps it begins in an imperfect sense of sonship, which leads to an imperfect realisation of our inheritance. Let the one be starved, and the other will be impoverished. Exalt the one, and you will enlarge the other. What think you, then, of sonship? What are its primary characteristics? Can we open this casket, and inspect a few of its shining jewels? What shall we mention as the first of the ingredients

in heavenly sonship? Will you be astonished if I begin with *Reverence?* That may appear to be a very grey element, but it is the groundwork of all the rest. There can be no true sonship when there is flippancy at the core of the life. At the very centre of the life there must be a little chapel, serene and untroubled, where the wings are quietly folded and the soul is prostrate in ceaseless adoration. In the great chapter which tells the story of a prophet's call and ordination, the seraphim are described as creatures with six wings; "with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly." I think we can claim kinship with the seraphim in that we are in possession of the pair of wings with which to fly! Never were Christian people more busy in flying about than they are to-day! I have said more than once that our popular vocabulary reeks with perspiration! We are for ever on the move, and busy doing this and doing that from morning until night. But I am not quite sure whether we could claim kinship with the seraphim in respect to the other wings. I think we are gravely lacking in those folded wings which suggest an amazed sense of the Highest, and which betoken reverence, awe, silence, and reserve. Reverence never hinders service—it enriches and perfects it. Perhaps if we had the folding, covering wings our very flying would have more serviceable results. Service which is devoid of reverence ever tends to run to superficial waste. If life has no holy of holies,

then the whole of life is apt to become a mere shop, the sphere of common barter, or an entertainment house, the domain of flippant pleasures, or an open refreshment room, the place of a carnal feast. And so I want to plead that our sonship be enriched by the cultivation of a deeper and more constant reverence. In this matter I am afraid that we Protestants are inferior to our brethren in the Roman Catholic communion. I think their religious life is more deeply marked by reverence and awe. It is frequently suggested that such reverence is only a matter of posture, an empty formality, a marrowless rite. I will not have the interpretation. I am considering a true and representative Roman Catholic, and I say that he has much to teach us in the matter of worthy and fruitful reverence. Go into a Roman Catholic church. Everywhere there are suggestions of the august and unspeakable. Every symbol is an entrance gate into a vista which awes the soul into adoration. Tokens and memorials of the Crucified are everywhere. The cross is ubiquitous. The worshipper bows low with an awed and silent wonder. The soul is reverently silent, and the body fashions itself to the mood of the spirit. But it is more than that: the posture of the body confirms the mood of the spirit. Perhaps we are not sufficiently attentive to these helpmeets to spiritual disposition. A bodily attitude does more than express a sentiment, it helps to create and foster it. It is even so with a common courtesy; the raising of the hat enriches the regards

of the spirit. And so is it in reverence to the Highest. A bodily attitude will minister to the posture of the soul. Even our Lord did not despise the bodily helpmeet, and when He communed with His Father He "fell on His knees." I urge that a little more care be given to this. There is a way of kneeling which is itself the beginning of prayer. Does this all seem rather sombre and gloomy, savouring more of the bondservant than the son, more of the cloister than the home? Ah! but I would wish to bring something of the cloister into the home, and the home itself will be lightened and transfigured. Let nobody think that true reverence makes for gloom and insipidity, and that it robs life of its buoyancy and freshness. Henry Drummond once went out alone into the high Alps. He was there in the early morning. The stupendous heights encompassed him on every side. He was awed by their majesty. His soul was bowed in reverent worship. And then what happened? He broke out into loud and exuberant laughter! The succession was not accidental, it was the fruit of a hidden root. The man who begins with the reverent recognition of the holiness and majesty of God will rise into a buoyancy of spirit in which all the merry-making powers will have free course to be glorified. Our Lord's Prayer teaches us that before we can pass into the gracious liberty of forgiveness and conquest we must begin with the awed and reverent stoop: "Our Father, which art in heaven, *hallowed be Thy name.*"

In the heart of a laughing, exuberant, and healthy sonship there is a quiet and retired retreat where the incense of adoration rises both night and day.

Now look again into the casket of this wealthy and comprehensive sonship. Here is the second jewel which I would like to display to you. Surely one of the primary elements in sonship is the privilege of intimate communion with the Father. I was one of a party who visited Chatsworth the other day. We were allowed the privilege of going through the noble house. But our liberties were severely restricted. We were allowed to pass rapidly through what is called "the show rooms," but we were rigidly excluded from the "living room." In many places there were red cords stretched across inviting passages, and our progress was barred. If I had been a son of the house I could have passed into the living rooms, the place of sweet and sacred fellowships, the home of genial intercourse, where secrets pass from lip to lip, and unspoken sentiments radiate from heart to heart. "Thou art no longer a bondservant, but a son!" Then I, too, am privileged to enjoy the fellowships of the living rooms, and no barrier blocks my way to the secret place. As a son I, too, am permitted to enter into a gracious intimacy with my God. I can indulge in confidences and share in the mutual secrets of the human and the Divine. Some time ago I heard an admiring father give a very rich and happy testimony to the relationship which existed between him

and his son. He said, "He is my son and my friend!" Is not that almost the Scriptural phrase, which embodies the noblest title conferred upon man, and which the Almighty used to describe His relation to one of His own children, "Abraham, my friend"? And is it not the wonderful heritage described to us by Jesus Christ our Saviour, "No longer do I call you servants but friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known unto you." Such is the rare and secret intimacy to which we are invited by our Lord. Have we seized upon this privilege of sonship? Are we with the undiscriminated crowd in the "show rooms"; or are we abiding with the Father in the living room? Are we enjoying an intimacy with the Lord, or have we only a kind of outside communion? Do we share all our secrets with the Lord and do we listen to the whispered secrets from His lips? Is there the abolition of all unnecessary reserve, and in all things do we take our Lord into our confidence? I have heard a business man say that when he goes down to his office in the morning, and before he opens his letters—nay, even with the unopened letters spread out before him—he "has a word with the Father!" Has not the biography of Mr. Gladstone revealed to us that he, too, had a similar way of sharing the intimate secrets of his life with the Lord? He had "a word with his Father" before he rose to speak in the House of Commons. He entered into the secret place before he appealed to the

public eye. He consulted with the Almighty before he formed his cabinets. Such constant communion soon deepens into a wonderful intimacy. The restricting reserve passes out of the life. The unnecessary shyness wears away. The soul and the Father are one.

And so we may regard it as a very prominent characteristic of sonship that it is endowed with large and wealthy liberty. But sonship is not only distinguished by liberty of communion in the secret place, but by an emancipation from many kinds of bondage and restriction with which the world is burdened and oppressed. Sonship is conspicuously and radiantly free. The sons of God ought to fascinate and win the world by the range and grandeur of their freedom. Where others are bound they must reveal themselves to be free. Is our freedom obtrusively prominent? Are we revelling "in the glorious liberty of the children of God"? The real son is free from the bondage of sin. His life is delivered from the haunting wail of sunless and hopeless dejection. The real son is free from the tyranny of self. He is not imprisoned by a small, exclusive, all-absorbing, egoistic, enslaving self. He has "a heart at leisure from itself to soothe and sympathise." The real son is free from the enslavement of the crowd. He is not daunted by the presence of the great and threatening multitude. God's sons are free and bold and stand alone!

"They are slaves who dare not be
In the right with two or three."

Slaves indeed! "But now thou art no longer a bondservant, but a son," and because a son thou art free to defy the crowd and be alone! One with God is in the majority. And the real son is free from the fear of death. His life moves on, not to expected defeat but to ultimate triumph. The approaching shadow does not mark a terminus, but a point of transition into the larger and immortal life. In all these ways the son of the Almighty is "called unto liberty." Such is sonship, marked by reverence, distinguished by intimacy, and glorious in its liberty. By our lives do we placard this sonship before our fellows? By our very manner of life does this sonship flame before the world? Do we move about like those who constantly realise the Presence of the Infinite? Is every spot a piece of holy ground? Are we sharing confidences with the Father? Has the burden of the oppressor been loosed from our backs, and are we standing erect in joyful freedom? Then are we sons, and sons indeed! "Now thou art . . . a son!" "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God."

"*And if a son then an heir.*" We are not disinherited or disowned. The recovery of our sonship is accompanied by the restoration of our lost lands. The coming to God is the regaining of our estate. We are not only sons, but heirs. And our estates

are not all beyond the river we call death. That is where we make an impoverishing mistake. We are not only heirs of "great expectations" but of great possessions. Superlatively rich are our expectations, but we have more than a competency by the way. Devonshire is a peculiarly rich and fruitful county, but it overflows into Somersetshire, and we are in the enjoyment of some of the glory before we reach the coveted spot. And so it is of heaven and ultimate glory.

"There is a land of pure delight,
Where saints immortal reign,
Infinite day excludes the night,
And pleasures banish pain."

But the glory overflows! There is something of the coveted country even in the highway of time.

"The hill of Zion yields
A thousand sacred sweets,
Before we reach the heavenly fields
Or walk the golden streets."

Expectancy? Yes. But again let me say we have a foretaste on the road. Do we look like it? Is our stride significant of men who have entered upon a large estate? Do we ever compel the alien world to say of us, "They look as though they were very well off!" That is the witness we ought to compel, and if our eyes were open, and our hearts were active, we should hear the witness on every side. Look at

this: "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." There is an inheritance for the sons of God, and surely an inheritance vast enough! Are we in possession of the estate? We may not own a square yard and yet the earth may be ours. Think of Jesus as He moved about in the ways of Galilee. Not a square foot could He call His own. But those snowy heights in the far north, those green hillsides at home, those juicy vineyards, those fair lilies, those busy birds, that cool river, the ever-changing lake—they were all His! In His meekness He had "inherited the earth." Are we in possession of the estate? "Having nothing," we may yet "possess all things"! How is it, for instance, with the night sky? Have we any sense of sonship as we gaze upon it, and do we regard it as a part of our inheritance? When we contemplate some spacious panorama from an Alpine height, or from the hills of our own neighbourhood, do we thrill in the joy of possession, in the privileged sharing in the sonship of our God? We are sons and heirs, and all the real beauty and the glory of the earth belong to those who are the friends and companions of the Lord.

And here is another portion of our estate. Let us listen, as Paul in one sentence defines it. "Ye are my joy and crown." Where was he gathering those delights? He had found them in other people's well-being, in the triumph of his fellow-men. He had discovered the well of unpolluted joy in another

man's success. Have we found it? It is to be found in our estate. "With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation." Some of these wells are in your brother, you must find them in his conquests and in his rewards. "All things are yours." Have we realised our inheritance? Let us lift the thought still higher. Let us lift our heirship up into the light of the burning bliss. We are "heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ!" That is wonderful and overwhelming! We are heirs to the Lord's inheritance; His possessions are ours; we may sit with Him in the heavenly places. We may inherit His strength, His joy, His peace, His triumph. We are joint heirs with Him in all the spiritual satisfactions that came to Him as He dwelt in the ways of men. And what did He inherit in the land of glory? "Nor pen nor tongue can tell." "Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." And we are the joint-heirs to it all! Have we begun even to entertain these great realities in our consciousness? We are the sons and heirs; are we worthy of the name? Would the world know it? Let us enter into a deeper consecration. Let us seek a closer sonship. Let us enter a little further into our estate. Let us move about with an exalted and hallowed and confident spirit, as those who are heirs to the promises, and who even now have inherited everlasting life.

VI

HIS MANY CROWNS

"On His head were many crowns."—Rev. xix. 12.

"Many crowns!" A sceptred, sovereign Lord, ruling with majestic sway! Such is the awe-inspiring, love-constraining figure unveiled in the New Testament Scripture. Not one of "the sceptred dead" who "rule our spirits from their urns." Not the might of a tender reminiscence; not a vital impulse from a dead personality; not a slowly but surely expiring force, losing itself in the new thought and energies of the time; not a fading sentiment loitering about an unlocated grave. No, a living monarch, exercising conscious, intelligent, purposeful rule. The New Testament Christ is a vast and glorious Personage, planning and accomplishing vast and glorious ends. He dominates everything, not as some swelling wave dominates the ripples that break upon the shore, nor as the Matterhorn dominates the smaller heights around her, but as the sun dominates and warms and illumines the earth.

"Many crowns." The multiplying word suggests the comprehensiveness of the sovereignty, the riches of the glory of His dominion. Now the wealth of any sovereignty is proportioned to its com-

prehension. The glory of any rule is gathered from the diversity of the elements which move beneath its rule in co-operative obedience. A monarchy is no richer than the union that lies behind it. I suppose that the Russian monarchy carries the poorest of European crowns. The German crown was immensely enriched by Bismarck in the unifying and solidifying of many states and peoples. The crown of the United Kingdom will possess a more brilliant lustre when the kingdom is really united, when the Irish people have dropped their stolid aloofness and resentment, and become gladly accordant in a common and willing obedience. The lustre of the Imperial crown is borrowed from the radiance of imperial unity. A disaffected India dulls our diadem, and the sovereign glory is impaired. So I repeat it, coronal majesty is dependent upon the wealth of unity that lies behind it. And I lift the reasoning up to the coronal glory of King Jesus. It is in the work of union, of reunion, which lies behind it, that we discover the riches of the sovereignty of Christ. The splendour of His sovereignty is to be sought in divisions healed, in alienations ended, in resentments changed into good will, in hard antipathies changed into gracious sympathies, in the filling up of gulfs, in the annihilation of distance, and in the creation and fostering of all holy intimacy and union. He was to be Sovereign, said the prophet, because He was to be "the repairer of the breach," ending discord, and creating harmony. And

on His head are to be "many crowns!" His unifying ministry is to be glorious, and, therefore, He is to be "King of kings, and Lord of lords," and His sovereignty is to shine with a splendour which will never be quenched in eclipse and night. I want, therefore, to look behind the sovereignty to the unifying work which gives it light and glory.

First of all, it is by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ that man is united to God. The Bible speaks of deep and terrible alienations. "Your sins have separated between you and your God." That is the teaching of the Scriptures, a teaching confirmed by the witness of individual knowledge and experience. Man is sundered from the highest, and sin has done it! That is the simple statement of condition, and that is the simple explanation. I know that there are dark abysses of mystery in the apparent simplicity, and we have no lead-lines to fathom the deeps. But here is the experimental end of the mystery, here is the twilight before it darkens into night: we know that sin is always the minister of division, and sin is always personal, and involves individual obligation. We know that sin destroys the highest relationships. We know that the atmosphere of sin corrodes all the fairest intimacies and all the finest spiritual powers. We know that sin withdraws the soul into an ever-dwindling circle, and separates it from God and from the best in man. We know that the "wages of sin" is division, alienation, destruction of correspondence, death! That is

the teaching of the Scriptures, and every man may find the confirmatory seal to the teaching in the witness of his own heart.

Now, let me look for the unifying ministry which gives the brightness to our Saviour's radiant crown. If He reigns it is to unite. "Ye that once were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ." We may explain it as we may—I will not now disturb the argument by presenting any particular theory. Unless we reject the entire Christian Scriptures, unless we drain away the very life-blood of the New Testament message, we must accept the teaching that in some altogether unique and solitary way Jesus Christ is the sole medium and minister of re-union between sin-sundered man and the holy God. Present what divergence of theory we may, all theories which draw their light and significance from the New Testament will find a convergence here—that if sin-bruised and sin-destroyed man is to be brought to the fulness and glory of the life of God, Jesus Christ has got to do it. Take that out of the New Testament, throw it away, and we leave flesh without blood, letter without spirit, words without a gospel, an ideal of reform without the power of salvation. "Ye that once were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ." He unites men to God by revelation, by the gift of Divine light; and the reign of the night is ended. He unites men to God by redemption, by the gift of Divine life; and the reign of death is ended. He unites men to God by inspiration, by the

gift of Divine power; and the reign of infirmity is ended. It is out of this glorious ministry of reunion that there emerges the splendour of His sovereignty and the lustre of His crown. And, therefore, we are told of "a multitude whom no man can number," standing before the throne, "clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands." "And these are they that came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." And those glistening robes of those redeemed and transfigured souls send their sheen into the Saviour's diadem, and light up the jewels of His eternal crown.

What other unity lies behind the sovereignty? It is by the grace of the Lord Jesus that man is to become united to man. If coronal majesty finds its glory in a background of harmony and union, then this is to be one of the coronal glories of our Lord. I freely confess that I am alive to the cynical comment which is made upon this claim by the distracted aspects of our modern life. The Unifier of man and man! and deriving His glory from the unity! Then, surely, He has but a thin and featureless sovereignty, a dull and unillustrious crown! Why, every new human discovery is first of all regarded as a minister of alienation and strife, and looms before the eyes of men as a menace and a frown! The aëroplane is a gigantic bird of ill-omen, a mechanical hawk which will hover about the abodes of men as an engine of disaster and death. "The

Unifier of man and man! The King of brotherhoods! What then, in this twentieth century, is the range of His territory and the sweep of His dominion? Here, there, and everywhere, upon the surface of human affairs there are bitter pools, circles of vicious ferment, hotbeds of jealousy and suspicion, the breeding-grounds of alienation and strife." Thus speaks the cynic, and I see it all, and know it all, and in spite of all I am an optimist! Thank God the soldiery of the world is not the final expression of power; nor will armaments finally hinder the growth of a dominant humanity among the children of men. All over the world subtle and invincible ties are being woven between people and people, gracious intimacies and fellowships, bonds of brotherhood, the strength and brightness of which will one day put the night-birds of war to final flight. These fraternal threads of union, weaving a solid compact understanding and good will, and never so operative as they are to-day, make no noise, and are apt to be discounted and ignored by those whose ears are only attuned to the clamour of war. But there the threads are, and the weaver is Christ! I make bold to say that even in the relationships between Britain and Germany, and in spite of all the wicked instigations to feverish jealousy and strife, the quiet ties of friendship, the commerce of mutual respect and good will, the beating of kindred hearts with a common faith, were never so strong and abounding as they are to-day. The people are drawing to-

gether. I am a believer in the strength of these invisible filaments, these moral and spiritual intimacies which are independent of race and clime; and I believe that, in a measure which not all of us realise, these correspondences are being created to-day. Yes, the peoples are drawing together, and they are being drawn by the Lord of the peoples, who when on earth was a Son of the people, the Man of Nazareth, the Son of Man, the Son of God.

> "Peoples and realms of every tongue
> Dwell on His name with sweetest song."

"After this I beheld, and lo! a great multitude which no man can number of all *peoples* and *kindreds* and *tribes* and *tongues,* standing before the throne." The coronal majesty of King Jesus shall derive some of its glory from the brotherhood of the race for which He died.

And, lastly, it is by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ that man and nature come into union, and He claims all the ministries by which the union is made. It is the purpose of the Lord that man shall live in closest communion with the natural world, reading His will in her order, His mind in her secrets, His truth in her symbols, finding the material house to be the house of God and a gate of heaven. "The whole earth is full of His glory," and He who is the Lord of glory, and "in whom all things consist," and who is the life and light of men, is Himself the minister of revelation even in the domain of

the natural world. And, therefore, in the shining sovereignty of Christ are to be found all the ministries by which men discern the invisible secrets of this visible world. And, therefore, the crown of poetry is one of the crowns of the Lord. Whenever in nature the opaque becomes the transparent, whenever the tangible discloses the intangible, whenever the material object becomes thin as a bridal veil and men discern a face, the uniting minister is the Christ of God. And therefore, also, the crown of art is one of the crowns of the Lord. It has been said that painting and sculpture are gymnastics of the eye, and so they are; they are gracious disciplines to train the eye to discern for itself the finer splendour of colour and the nobler expressions of form in the natural world. And whatever unveils to the eye of man a loveliness hitherto concealed, some chaste and chastening beauty of form or hue, is itself a means of grace, and is, therefore, gracious, and can have but one source, even the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. And, therefore, also the crown of science is one of the crowns of the Lord. He who is the truth can never be divorced from any form of truth. No ray of light travels in a dominion alien to the realms of the King. Discovery is only the human side of the Divine revelation. A transcribed law is a deciphered thought of the Lord. Every liberated secret is an unfolding of the unexplorable riches of Christ.

These, then, are some of the crowns of the King.

Behind His sovereignty are unifying ministries of unutterable grandeur. By Him shall man be united to God. By Him shall man be united to man. By Him shall man be united to the mystic and significant presences of this natural world. His are the crowns of science and poetry and art, to Him belongs every ministry that leads men into the secrets of the Divine. "On His head are many crowns!"

VII

THE HALLOWING OF THE OUTER COURTS

"His train filled the temple."—Is. vi. 1.

The prophet had lost a hero and found his Lord. "In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord." He had anticipated that when the good King Uzziah died the linch-pin would be removed, and the car of the nation's life would topple over into confusion and disaster. All Isaiah's hopes were centred in this radical and aggressively righteous monarch, and he feared for the state when its sovereign should be taken. He anticipated chaos, and in place of chaos there emerged the Lord of Order! He found that in the days of his hero-worship he had been living in comparative twilight, the real Luminary had been partially obscured, there had been an eclipse of the Sun; and now, with the passing of Uzziah the eclipse had ended, and the Presence of the Lord blazed out in unexpected glory! "In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord." It had seemed to the foreboding fears of the depressed youth as though the very existence of the kingdom was involved in the continued reign of the king. If he goes—what then? A crisis was assured! And yet in place of the crisis came God, and the effulgent glory was

bewildering. Succeeding generations of men have shared these pessimistic fears. We have riveted our gaze upon the incidental until the incidental has become the essential, and we have feared the withering blast of death. "What will Israel do when Uzziah is taken?" "What will Methodism do when John Wesley is removed?" "What will the Salvation Army do when anything happens to its General?" "What will this or that church do when bereft of its minister?" And the long-feared crisis has come, but instead of being left to the hopeless, clammy darkness of the grave, we have gazed upon the dazzling glories of a forgotten heaven! The transient pomp and splendour died, and their passing removed the veil from the face of the Eternal, and we saw the Lord. "In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord." He anticipated an end, he found a new beginning.

But it was not only that Isaiah had an unexpected vision of God, it was the unique character of the vision which impressed and empowered him. Where does the wonder of the prophet culminate? "I saw the Lord, *sitting upon a throne!*" That was not the unfamiliar sight, and not there did the prophet's wonder gather. "*High and lifted up!*" A terrible sublimity, like some towering and awe-inspiring Alpine height! Yet not there was concentrated the supreme surprise. "*And his train filled the temple!*" That was the marvel which made the prophet's heart stand still. He was not a stranger

to the conception of the throne, or of the lonely and snow-white exaltation, but this vision of the train that "filled the temple" was altogether foreign to his thought. We must remember that in all these temple arrangements of the olden days there were different grades and varying degrees of sanctity. Even in the time of our Lord there were divisions, separating the holy and the profane, beginning at the outer courts, where the foot of the Gentile might tread, but beyond which he was not permitted to pass, on penalty of death, on to the veiled and silent chamber where the awful Presence dwelt between the cherubim. And there was the same gradient in the thought of the young Isaiah. There were divisions in his temple, separating the different degrees of sanctity, ranging from the much-diluted holiness of the remote circumference to the clean and quenchless flame of the sacred Presence. And now comes this strange and all-convulsing vision: "His train *filled* the temple," filled it, every section of it, every corner of it, to the furthest and outermost wall. "The posts of the thresholds," not merely the curtains of the inner shrine, "the posts of the thresholds moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was *filled* with smoke." That is the word which expresses the supreme wonder of this great inaugural vision. "His train *filled* the temple!" "The house was *filled* with smoke." The garments of the Almighty swept an unsuspected area, His robe impartially carpeted the entire pile, there was not a

single inch that was exempt from the touch of His enveloping Presence. "His train filled the temple." What, then, had the crisis brought to this young hero-worshipper who had been so fearful of the passing of his noble king? It had brought to him a larger conception of God, a filling-out conception of God, a full-tide conception, filling every nook and creek and bay in the manifold and far-stretching shore of human life.

Now, the most important crises in a man's life are related to the growth or impoverishment of his conception of God. It is momentous when some area in the wide circle of his life is unexpectedly discovered to be the dwelling-place of God. Robinson Crusoe begins to track his desolate and presumably uninhabited island, and one day, on the sandy shore, he comes upon the print of a human foot. That footprint revolutionises his entire conception of the island, and all his plans and expedients are transfigured. And so the soul, moving over some area of its activities which has never been related to God, and over which God has never been assumed to exercise a living and immediate authority, one day unexpectedly discovers His footprints upon this particular tract of the sands of time, and the whole of the spiritual outlook is transformed. "Surely, the Lord is in *this* place, and I knew it not." "This, too, is none other than the house of God, and the gate of heaven." I say it is a momentous crisis in the history of the soul when its conception of the

Lord's Presence and authority covers unfamiliar and unsuspected fields. It is a high birthday for the soul when the soul discovers that the Lord is on the other side of the barrier, and that His train fills the temple.

Now, some of the great soul-crises can be more particularly defined. There are certain familiar experiences, enlarging and enriching, which mark the pilgrimage of every man's thought as he moves forward in the life divine. They have this common characteristic, that each is concerned with the reclamation of some province which has hitherto been regarded as altogether unhallowed or only partially sanctified. Let me give two or three modern examples. Here is a temple, with a dividing barrier, separating the pile into two sections, one of which is described as sacred and the other as secular or profane. That is a division which is made, not merely by the thoughtless and flippant, but even by many grave and serious minds. On one side the barrier they move softly and reverently, as though feeling the very breathings of the Almighty Presence; on the other side they step loudly and thoughtlessly, as though the Almighty were absent. And then one day there comes one of the great crises I have named, and on the secular side of the barrier they see the trailing garments of the Lord, and they are filled with a surprise which ends in resurrection. For it is a birthday for the soul when we discover that the Lord occupies the whole of this divided

house, and that His train fills the temple. You know how we divide this temple into the secular and sacred. We began with personages, and we said that all who stand on one side of the line shall be regarded as holy, and shall receive singular ordination and anointing. And then we passed from the personages to their work, and we decided that the work of the anointed should be esteemed as holy, and that his calling should be regarded with reverent awe. And so the ministry was supposed to live on one side the barrier, engaged in its holy calling, while quite a lower significance was attached to the work that is effected on the other side. I have frequently heard reference to my own vocation as a "sacred calling," but I have rarely, if ever, heard the same sober phrase applied to the work of the baker or tent-maker, or even to the work of the City Councillor or the members of the House of Commons. But the seamless robe of the Lord is on both sides the artificial barrier, and all things on either side can be equally sacred and sanctified. Our Anglican brethren consecrate their graveyard, and they consecrate the bells that peal in their towers and spires; I do not disagree with it: it is a most impressive ministry; I only say, go on with the consecration service until "the very bells upon the horses are holiness unto the Lord." I have seen the trailing garment of the Lord in the chancel, at the altar, among the multitude in the nave, among the little group of lonely mourners as they stand at the new-made tomb, but I

have also seen it in the open streets, among the common ways of men, at the mart, in the forge, at the common meal as well as at the sacramental feast. The sweeping garment is on the other side of the barrier, and the train fills the temple. It is a great day for a man when first he sees the train of the Almighty wrapping itself about his common work! "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain!" This is our sacred place! "Ye say that at Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship," but that is our secular place! And then the Lord opens the woman's eyes to the wonderful vision which makes Gerizim and Jerusalem one! "Neither in this mountain" in particular, "nor at Jerusalem" in particular, but anywhere, "in spirit and in truth!" And so the barrier is crossed, the sacred and the secular become one, the sweet incense rises in the outer courts, and the strain of the singing seraphim revives even those who stand at the threshold. We can go to our work as we go to our worship, we can go to the polling-booth as we go to church, for "the Lord is high and lifted up, and His train fills the temple."

Let me now mention another temple which our modern thought so frequently divides into sections of different degrees of sanctity, as the temple was divided in the days of old. It is the temple of the entirely personality, and one side of the barrier is called body, and the other is called spirit, and I cannot think they are commonly looked upon with the

same venerable and awe-inspiring regard. It is a great day for a man when the wonderful revelation breaks upon his eyes, that these two entities possess a common sanctity, that our division is unwise and impoverishing, and that His train fills the whole temple. In the olden days there was a school of thinkers who regarded matter as essentially evil, the very sphere and dwelling-place of evil, and therefore the body itself was esteemed as the very province of the devil. It was therefore further reasoned that to despise the body was to heap shame and contumely upon the devil, and that one of the holiest exercises was thus to treat the flesh with disdain and contempt. The body was a thing of the gutter, gutter-born, and destined to a gutter-death! Therefore they neglected it, they bruised it, they refused to cleanse it, and they utterly deprived it of any attention and adornment. So far as the body-part of the temple was concerned, the Lord was not in it! Now we can see the force and relevancy of the Apostle's firm and vigorous teaching: "Know ye not that your *body* is the temple of the Holy Ghost?" That word would come as a bewildering surprise! The Lord's temple does not end where the spirit ends; it includes the body too: and His train fills the temple! "I beseech you, therefore, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." *That* veil in the temple has been rent in twain!

There is still yet another temple which we divide into discriminating sections much as the temple of old was divided. One side of the barrier is described as home, the other side as foreign, the one side as Jew, the other side as Gentile. And so the temple itself, rather than the partitioning veil, is too frequently rent in twain. It is a season of wonderful regeneration when first the train of the Almighty is seen to fill the entire temple, and the whole of the unworthily divided area is seen to be the familiar walking-ground of the Eternal God. To go out, I say, into the section regarded as foreign, and to behold the footprints of the Lord, to see that, even where home ends, the trailing garment of the Lord sweeps on, is a great birthday for the soul, a day of fertilising knowledge and of energising grace! To gaze upon other sects, foreign to our own, and to see common footprints in the varying roads; to gaze upon other nations, foreign to our own, and to see the mystic garment in their unfamiliar ways, to discover that the train fills the entire temple, is to enter an experience only less momentous than our conversion, for it is a second conversion into the larger thought and love of God. "In Christ Jesus there is neither circumcision nor uncircumcision, neither Jew nor Gentile, neither bond nor free." "His train filled the temple."

And as it is with all these unlawful distinctions, distinctions so frequently aggravated into antagonisms, so it is with the alienated ministries of science

and religion. They have been too commonly regarded as though separated by an impassable barrier, on only one side of which there flamed the presence of the Lord. We have regarded the revelations of science as though they were the decrees of an alien power, and we have listened suspiciously to the story of the planet as though it were antagonistic to the story of grace. But now we are reaching a wiser synthesis. More and more clearly are we recognising that the Lord's train fills the entire temple, and that on both sides the artificial barrier we have the revelation of the same mind. And so now we are watching science as she deciphers the rocks, and ransacks the treasures of the air, and unravels the history of planets, in the same reverent spirit in which we watch the learned saint disentangle the truth from the ancient word. His train *fills* the temple! One decree runs through the whole universe, and the ultimate secret of Calvary will not be found in final conflict with the liberated secrets of the stars.

VIII

WHAT IS SIN?

"O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me out of the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord!"—Rom. vii. 24, 25.

A by no means incompetent judge has declared his own conviction that this seventh chapter of Romans is "most certainly the most terrible tragedy in all literature, ancient or modern, sacred or profane." "Set beside the seventh of the Romans," he says, "all your so-called great tragedies—your Macbeths, your Hamlets, your Lears, your Othellos, are all but so many stage-plays; so much sound and fury, signifying next to nothing when set alongside this awful tragedy of sin. . . . The seventh of the Romans should always be printed in letters of blood. Here are passions. Here are terror and pity. Here heaven and hell meet, as nowhere else in heaven or hell; and that, too, for their last grapple together for the everlasting possession of that immortal soul, till you have a tragedy indeed; beside which there is no other tragedy."

Yes, that is just what this chapter is and does. It describes the supreme tragedy of the soul. It describes the daily array of contending combatants even upon the plane of the sanctified life. To these

hostilities there is no truce; the apparent departure of the foe is only a feint for a subtler approach. The enemy is on the field when night lulls the senses to rest, he is on the field at the new awaking. "To me, who would do good, evil is present," a forceful, bewitching mesmerism, an almost stupefying fascination! "What I hate, I do!" "The good which I would I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do." "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me out of the body of this death," out of the death-dealing grip of this tremendous and ubiquitous foe? Such is the tragedy, and we have all experienced its horrors, for the battle and the battle-fields are only limited by the race. But not yet have we finished the verse. Up to this point the narrative of the chapter has raced along in heated, gasping, bewildered leaps, but the very next sentence comes like a sweet, restful morning after the convulsions of an awful night. "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me out of the body of this death?" . . . "I thank God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." So He gives His beloved rest and peace.

And now let us come to the immediate matter of our meditation by asking this question, What is this sin which so inflames this narrative, and so tyrannises the life? What is sin? I am not seeking for a mere theological definition, but for some clear, truthful, adequate, experimental conception of it. What is sin? The place to ask the question, and to

seek an answer to it, is not in the restrictive and perverting publicity of a debating society, but in the deep solitudes of one's own soul. The evidence which is requisite for a judgment will never be tabled in the open court of publicity, it must be sought amid all the reserves of the secret place. It cannot be discussed as a theological generality, an impersonal abstraction, removed from the colour and life and movement of the individual soul. There are many mathematical problems which can be discussed in abstraction, far away from the hard realities of common experience. Nay, it has frequently been by the mystical highway of mathematical abstractions that we have marched to the discovery of material facts. The mathematician has discovered the existence of the comet long before it appeared to the astronomers. From the generality we got a particularity; by an abstraction we were led to a fact. But I do not think that is the order when we are investigating the nature of sin. In this realm I rather think the course is not from an idea to an experience, but from an experience to an idea. Before half a dozen men can fruitfully discuss the theory of sin, it is essential that each man shall have investigated the facts of his own soul and examined the secret judgments of his own experience. The appeal is to Cæsar, and in this relationship Cæsar is the individual soul.

What, then, has our hidden consciousness to say about it? Matthew Arnold declared that sin was

"not a monster, but an infirmity." I will not discuss that *in vacuo*. I merely ask, what has my soul to say about it? Does my soul accept the ameliorative term, and feel itself secretly justified? If sin be only infirmity, there would be no sense of guilt and no harrowing consciousness of blame. A man who is born with imperfect physical sight is not responsible for his infirmity, nor is he conscious of any burdensome blame. But when I sin I am conscious of more than weakness; it is a happening that might have happened otherwise, and I know myself responsible for the choice. And so when I go into my soul where the sin has been wrought, and seek to label the sin by the plausible name of "infirmity," my soul rejects the plea in the consuming sense of its own shame.

Nor do I fare any better when I am presented with the excuse of inherited temperament. I am told that I am the creature of heredity, and that I have inherited an unfavourable and overwhelming bias. I take that softening plea into my soul, where the wreckage occasioned by a violent passion is strewn all about, but my soul will have none of it, and spurns the explanation as futile and irrelevant. The extraordinary thing is that I can excuse another man because of his legacy of bad blood and jarring nerves, but I cannot excuse myself. Nor can the other man whom I extenuate find any self-extenuation in the same plea. If heredity were invincible we should know no guilt and experience no blame.

But after every outburst of passion my soul knows it could have been otherwise, my judgment is against myself, I do not distribute the blame over my ancestry, I make the indictment personal and immediate; "my sin is ever before me."

Nor do I fare any better with another suggestion, namely this, that sin is adequately explained by the invincibility of external circumstances, by the brutally terrific power of my environment. I confess I am very eager to throw this shield over many a brother, but it offers no defence to my own soul. I note the adversaries which surround my brother, like wolves bearing down on a fold, I mark the fierceness and suddenness of the attack, and I feel compelled to say, How could he have done anything else? But again, the extraordinary thing is this, that my brother, in his own secret consciousness, cannot accept the plea, and secretly rejects the excuse. He knows that the surrender was not inevitable, and that, to the very last moment, it was a possibility to have mastered the circumstances which led to his degradation. No man is compelled to lie; and every man knows it. He can breast the blows of circumstance, and honour and keep the truth. I am not now concerned with what we say to one another, but with what we say in our secret selves, and I testify that in my own self-consciousness my sin never finds its explanation in any supposed inevitability in my surroundings.

But let us go a step higher. It has been said

that the essence of all sin is the making self the centre to which we subordinate all other beings and interests. I think there is much truth in the statement, and yet I think it is a very inadequate explanation. When I take the statement and examine it among the experiences of my own secret consciousness it does not give me satisfaction. There is more in sin than the statement includes, more than the exaltation of one's self and the subordination of one's brother. These may be and are the consequences of sin, but I do not think they constitute its essence. When I sin I am conscious of more than self and brother; in the wide, silent solitudes of my soul I am dimly conscious of a vaster Presence still. I may not be able to define it, but its existence is surely recognised. When I retire into this secret consciousness I feel I cannot express sin in terms of self and brother, but only in terms of self and brother and God. There are more circles and centres than two; there is a third circle, and the centre of this circle I cannot forget or ignore. When Judas betrayed the Nazarene, could the sin be all expressed in terms of Judas and Nazarene; or was there a third Factor present, and was it the mysterious Third which haunted him with awful dread, and which drove him headlong to "the field of blood"? In the great drama of "The Tempest," Alonzo foully rids himself of Prospero, and usurps his place and power; could the sin be adequately expressed in terms of self and brother, or is a third included,

and is it to the third we owe the wail of after days?

> "O, it is monstrous! monstrous!
> Methought the billows spoke, and told me of it;
> The winds did sing it to me: and the thunder,
> That deep and dreadful organ-pipe, pronounced
> The name of Prosper!"

"The voice of the great Eternal spake in that mighty tone." When I closely interrogate my own secret consciousness, I find this threefold circle in every sin.

And further, therefore, I cannot altogether agree with the statement that "sin is the deprivation of God." "Deprivation" is, perhaps, a word unfortunately chosen. The Scriptures use another and a better word. "Your sins have separated between you and your God." Yes, but the separation is not the sin, it is the consequence of the sin. When I sin God is not away, I am too powerfully conscious that He is there. I hear His voice, I deliberately go against it. I have gone against it when it rang out like a loud alarm-bell in the dead of night! What, then, is sin?

What say the Scriptures? Jesus had comparatively little to say about sin as sin. Enough had been said, and enough was known. He came to remove it, not to describe it. But this much is taught, these two things at any rate, and I think they are both confirmed in the secret consciousness of the

individual life; firstly, sin is a voluntary breaking away from the Divine will, a conscious and deliberate violation of the Divine order; and, secondly, sin results in a certain distortion of the life, a certain twist in our relationship to the Highest, which evidences itself in the disturbing and maiming sense of guilt. A violation and a distortion! Such is the teaching of the Scriptures, and such are the findings of my own experience. I am prepared, therefore, to accept these words of a great experimental thinker, that sin is "the God-resisting disposition, in virtue of which man, in self-sufficiency and pride, opposes himself to God, and withdraws himself from the spirit of Divine life and love." That satisfies my consciousness, as indeed it explains my experience.

Well, now, how shall we deal with it? "Who shall deliver us out of this body of death?" Matthew Arnold tells us that it is "an infirmity to be got rid of," but he omits to tell us how. He certainly says that "thinking about sin beyond what is indispensable for the firm effort to get rid of it is a waste of energy and a waste of time." I truly believe in the sanity of the warning conveyed in this counsel; but, ah, me! that bit about "the firm effort to get rid of it" appears to mock at my desire. It seems like telling one of our electric cars, whose trolley-pole is all awry, to make "firm effort" to get along! Just what Matthew Arnold counsels me to do I am unable to do. What is this "firm effort" by which I am to get rid of sin, and its attending

distortion of guilt? Another counsellor comes to my side with the answer, get rid of it "by healthy developments in favourable conditions." Yes, but again, what are the "favourable conditions" in which the "healthy development" will be inevitable? Mark you, it cannot be done by education. Paul was an educated man, and of a very fine order, but he needed something far beyond what could be provided by the schools. Let us make no mistake about it, we are not going to purge our land of sin by a more efficient system of education. Why, our public schools are possible cesspools. There is not a schoolmaster or schoolmistress anywhere who does not painfully realise how comparatively impotent is a school system to keep life pure and sweet. The discipline of a school can compel an external order; it cannot control the riot that may be raging within. Nor is the curriculum fitted to accomplish much more than the discipline; at any rate, let us not unduly build upon the influence of our schools in purifying and directing the energies of our youth, and in establishing them in a sweet and wholesome life. Nor are we going to do it by the creation of garden cities and the transfiguration of men's material surroundings. Let me not be misunderstood; not for one moment would I wish it to be inferred that I disparage these helpful ministries to the creation of a larger and healthier life. It is the knowledge of their worth which has driven me to seek to bring into one of the dingiest centres of a great city something of the light and

colour and warmth of finer fellowships. But I want to labour under no misapprehension. We may, by a more favourable environment, diminish crime and at the same time only change the accent of sin. When a man ceases to be a drunkard he does not necessarily become a saint. Police statistics may be reliable guides as to the crime of a city, but they are no criterion of its moral and spiritual health. We may diminish the city's crime, and at the same time utterly fail to diminish the city's sin. Crime is just the public obtrusiveness of sin; we may stop the obtrusion, and the crime has gone, but the sin itself may hide beneath the skin. We may remove the eruption, and leave the blood defiled. There may be no drunkard in a city, but sin may abound. No, the merely fine environment will leave the essential virus untouched, and will not deliver us from the bondage and wretchedness of indwelling sin.

Nor do I think that altruistic service will give us the desired emancipation. I have known men and women who have gone out to serve their fellows, and in the service their hearts have been dark and cold as a tomb, haunted by ghostly and disturbing presences. Men go on to public bodies, and surrender their strength to the common weal, but this in itself does not bring the freedom they seek. All these are comparatively favourable conditions, but taken altogether, and alone, they will not deliver the life from the virus of sin. Then, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me out of this body of death?

I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." I bring you to that—the reality of sin, and the reality of a personal Saviour. "Through Jesus Christ." The deliverance can be effected by a personal covenant, by the union of two lives, by the mutual surrender of your life and of the life of the Prince of Glory, the now exalted Christ of God. Jesus Christ, who liberated the palsied, who freed the Magdalene, is alive, exercising universal sway, and can come into vital, revitalising, emancipating relationship with every child of the race. On His side the surrender is made; "for their sakes I sanctify Myself," and when on our side the surrender is made, and the spiritual union is consummated, this is the joyful experience in the sweet consciousness of a redeemed life:

"He breaks the power of cancelled sin,
He sets the prisoner free."

IX

A REGAL CONSCIOUSNESS

"Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He was come from God and went to God; He riseth from supper, and laid aside His garments: and took a towel, and girded Himself."—JOHN xiii. 3, 4.

What an amazing succession is here revealed! We ascend height upon height, as though we were climbing some towering Alpine range, and just as we reach the shining culmination we seem to pass into sheerest commonplace! The sequence appears altogether unworthy of its antecedents. We are taken along a road, which abounds in arresting and awful surprises, to a most ordinary and homely issue. "Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He was come from God and went to God," having this superlative consciousness, "knowing" these things, what will He do?—"He riseth from supper, and laid aside His garments; and took a towel, and girded Himself . . . and began to wash the disciples' feet." The succession almost disappoints us, for it would appear as if the tame conclusion does not justify the majestic premises. Such violence would never be the device of fiction; fiction would have fashioned a more congenial consummation. It must be born of the stern and inevitable logic of life. Jesus of Nazareth,

possessed by this unique and spacious consciousness, put on the apron of the slave, and instinctively addressed Himself to menial service.

Now, in this succession I discern a very vital principle. We need something of these antecedents if we would have something of these consequents. A big consciousness is the primary requisite for chaste and delicate service. It is the small artist who always pines for big canvas. Turner could put the infinite into a square inch. The really big man can be at home in small spaces; the man of small make-up wants nothing less than the hoardings! If you want fine detail in anything you require a full man to produce it. Passion is needed to carve a cherry stone. A poet of vast and commanding consciousness can spend a whole day fashioning the vowel-music of a single line. We need great minds for lace-like ministries. If we want fine manners we must make fine men. Tender graces belong to men whose being is the incarnation of grace. And, therefore, I am proclaiming that the order of this narrative is not an accidental coincidence, but a vital and blood-linked succession. The roomiest consciousness expresses itself in the finest and loveliest services. "Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He was come from God and went to God: He riseth from supper," and discharged the humble duties of a slave.

And now we are ready for an inference. The only really effective way to foster and enrich mutual

ministries among men is to seek the enlargement of their consciousness. If we would have finer "doing" we must seek larger "knowing." A man's demeanour among his fellows is determined by the range of his own mystic relationships. What is the scope and quality of his consciousness? How does he conceive his lineage and his kinships? In the secret sanctuary of his own soul, with whom does he claim communion? Answer me these questions, and I can infer all the rest. If he be a man of dwarfed and narrow consciousness the external hospitalities will be artificial or denied. Take the disciples as they stand unveiled to us in this very chapter. The doors of their consciousness are thrown open, and we are permitted to enter into their secret place. And what do we find? No far-stretching vistas of noble lineage and descent, but a mean prison of petty self-conceit, an ambition which never wings its way to a distant horizon. They are men of a tiny consciousness, and so they each and all refuse the servant's task. We require a consciousness so extensive and glorious that, like a full and brimming spring-tide, easily filling every creek and crevice along the varied shore-line, shall spontaneously enter into every trifling gap of human need and ministry, and fill and glorify it. "Jesus knowing"—there you have the brimming, tidal consciousness—"began to wash the disciples' feet"—and there you have the oceanic fulness in the homely creek. Expand the consciousness, and you will fill the creeks.

Now, it is the mission of Christianity to create this vast and expanded consciousness. How does the Christian religion find us? It finds us possessed of a consciousness which is little and belittling. We have lost our real and vitalising dignity, and what we commonly call our dignity is only a poor little mushroom growth which breeds upon the hot-bed of feverish vanity and pride. False dignity has its shallow roots in a rubbish-heap: true dignity sucks its nutriment from the Infinite. But we may lose the finer dignity. "This, my son, is dead!" Dead to what? Dead to his own sonship: it is the atrophy of a relationship. "This, my son, is dead!" That particular kinship is as if it were not; there is no communion; it is as if the wire between the provincial centre and the metropolis were cut or impaired, and all communication has ceased. "This, my son, is dead"; the wire between father and son is not worked, the kinship is not recognised, the life has become utterly and entirely provincial, of the earth, earthy, and the spiritual metropolis is ignored. The noble lineage is neglected, and human life toys with the slender tinsel of smaller dignities which make no blood contribution its service. "This, my son, was dead, *and is alive again!*" That is the conscious recovery of the lost lineage, and the birth-movement of a new life. "When he was come to himself!" He had been far away from himself, enmeshed in petty and unclean communions which had drained away his nobler sentiments. But "when he was

come to himself"—in one still and pregnant hour, he faced his very self, and piercingly cross-examined it—"Who art thou? Thou art here among the swine, famished and disquieted, and thou wouldst fain appease thy cravings with the husks that the swine do eat! But who art thou? What is thy lineage? Whose blood runs in thy veins? Wert thou purposed for this condition and for this companionship? Who art thou?" And, in response to this recovering quest, the long-ebbed tide of regal consciousness began to flow again, and the powers of a long neglected lineage were restored. And the prodigal, "knowing" his pedigree, "knowing" his father's affluence and goodness, and "knowing" his own poverty and shame, said to himself, "I will arise, and go to my father!" And in that recovered lineage the atrophied relationship was revitalised, communion between the metropolis and the provinces became operative again, spiritual commerce and inspiration were brought from afar, and the life regained its wealthy and protective dignity. The dwarfed and withered consciousness recovered the vast and healthful energies which were his by right of noble birth. You have it all, in forceful analogy, in Shakespeare's story of the lapse and recovery of Prince Hal. When Prince Hal forgot his kingly lineage, and lived and moved as though no royal blood coursed in his veins, he became the boon companion of the social riff-raff of his day, and Falstaff and his revelling boisterous crew afforded congenial

society. The king's son was dead! No large and dignified relationship selected his ways and protected the purity and sweetness of his intercourse. But stride on to the further unfoldings of the great drama, where Prince Hal awakes from his tragic sleep, and his consciousness expands, and in the now illumined country of his soul there tower the long-eclipsed heights of his own lineage and nobility. And Prince Hal came to himself; once dead, he is now alive again! And mark how the recovered sense of great relationships purifies and chastens his life. It is with him as with the prodigal, the swine-company no longer affords congenial nutriment for his heightened cravings and desires. Hear this little snatch of final intercourse between Falstaff and the recovered son:

Fal. "Save thy grace, King Hal! my noble Hal!
My King! my Jove! I speak to thee, my heart!"

King. "I know thee not, old man: fall to thy prayers:
How ill white hairs become a fool and jester!
I have long *dreamed of* such a kind of man,
So surfeit swelled, so old, and so profane:
But, being awake, I do despise my dream.
* * *
Reply not to me with a fool-born jest:
Presume not that I am the thing I was:
For heaven doth know, so shall the world perceive
That I have turned away my former self:
So will I those that kept me company."

The recovery of an enlarged and kingly consciousness hallowed and refined his entire life. He found his pedigree-roll, and he moved like a king!

Now, the Christian religion seeks to create this vast and dignified consciousness in the minds of all men. It seeks to destroy a small and poisonous self-conceit, and to replace it by a splendid self-esteem. Christianity comes to me with this ennobling ministry. It says to me, "What a mean little consciousness thou hast! How near is thine horizon! How low is thy heaven! Let me *enlarge* thee!" That is ever the mission and ministry of Christianity; indeed, one might say that the whole of the inspired word, from end to end, is the kindly minister of enlargement. The good Lord seeks to take down the walls of our mental prison house, and give our souls outlook and breathing-space in the infinite. And how does He do it? He does it, first of all, by recalling us to the knowledge of our pedigree: "this my son!" There is royal blood in our veins. We have made sorry wrecks of ourselves, as indeed do many members of our social aristocracy, but I have never yet gazed upon an aristocratic ruin without discerning some birthmarks of an original distinction; some bit of a capital remained, some fine line of tracery about a broken window or a half-demolished porch—something glorious was left of the original glory. And so it is with the aristocratic family of God: in our ruins there are abundant signs of the purposed temple, a broken fragment here and there suggestive of the grandeur of the finished pile; but, even if there were nothing else to remind us of our lineage, there is the neglected voice of conscience

moaning over the ruin like the wail of a cold night-wind. But be all that as it may, the Lord comes to us in His gracious evangel and seeks to recall our minds to the vastness and splendour of our forgotten kinships. "Thou art a son of the Almighty, thou art a daughter of the Almighty? Are these fitting habits, is this a suitable attire? Why these rags? Where is thine imperial purple? Where is thy kingly stride and thy splendid yet easy demeanour? 'The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but My people do not consider!' Thou hast forgotten Me, and thou hast therefore lost thyself!" And so the good Lord comes to tell us that we were never purposed to be the imprisoned victims of a small ambition, circling gin-like in the petty round of the immediate day, but to step out, with fine, swinging, progressive stride, in "the glorious liberty of the children of God." Dost thou know who thou art? Thou art the kinsman of the Almighty. Ransack thy pedigree! And "knowing" it, what shall be thy life?

"Can you see the castle?" I once asked of two humble cottagers, who lived in a little house not far from one of "the stately homes of England"; "can you see the castle?" And they answered me: "Only in the winter time!" When the green foliage was thick and massy the castle was hidden, but when the nipping winter began to strip the trees and lay them bare the castle came into view. "Only in the winter time," said my humble friends. And it is

when the foliage round about our life is thick and plentiful, and we are embosomed in summer fulness and glory, that God's castle is so frequently hidden, and we lose the mind of the spiritual and the eternal. And then He sends an apparently cruel but kindly winter, our trees are stripped and bared, and in our impoverishment we see our Father's house! "And there arose a mighty famine in that land. . . . And he said, How many hired servants of my father!" The castle was in view! O, kindly sable ministry, that opens our souls to the Infinite!

But we need not wait the unveiling calamity. Let us quietly take our pedigree, keep it by us, and continually rehearse it; let us con our lineage, and nourish a holy and defensive self-esteem. And let us address noble affirmatives to our own souls. "My soul, thou hast unutterably great relationships! The Lord Almighty thinks upon thee, and loves thee, and seeks thy company! The Lord Jesus Christ is thy elder brother, and is waiting to share with thee things hidden from the foundations of the world! Rise, my soul, and humbly claim thy destined dignity!" And, believe me, that vast and ample consciousness will express itself in gentle and kindly ministries among our fellow-men. "Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He was come from God and went to God: He riseth from supper, and laid aside His garments, and took a towel and girded Himself, and began to wash the disciples' feet."

X

LULLED BY HIGH IDEALS

"I knew that Thou art a gracious God, and full of compassion, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy and repentest Thee of the evil."—JONAH iv. 2.

"*I knew* that Thou art a gracious God." And when that is the indwelling knowledge, lying in the secret heart of a man, what will be the character of the man? "I knew that Thou art a gracious God." What will be the ethical fruit of such knowledge? What may we anticipate as the spontaneous and shining issue of such convictions? What was the practical and vital logic of Jonah himself? Let me prefix the preliminary sentence of the verse, for I have only given an amputated limb. Here is the full body of the apostle's thought. "Therefore I hasted to flee unto Tarshish, *for* I knew that Thou art a gracious God." "I ignored the clamant imperative of the Eternal will, for I knew that Thou art a gracious God!" "I knew that Thou art . . . full of compassion, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy"; and, therefore, "I hasted to flee unto Tarshish," even though the voice of the Eternal was calling loudly elsewhere, and Nineveh was speeding down a steep path of degeneracy to moral and

spiritual death. "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it: for their wickedness is come up before Me!" "Therefore, I hasted to flee unto Tarshish, for I knew that Thou art a gracious God." You see the steps of his reasoning. Nineveh is most certainly needy. Its wickedness is portentous and glaring. Things, bad beyond utterance, gaily parade themselves in the public streets. Corruption deepens into intensified filth, all the filthier that it bedecks itself with an artificial grace. Sorrow hides in silence, and wrong smothers its wails for fear of deeper wrong. The end of it all must—ah, well, the end of it all will be all right: the ungodly ferment will issue in delicate wine: the gracious Lord will interpose, the putrefaction will cease, and the terrors of night will be changed into the songs of the morning! Nineveh is bad, but then the Lord is good, and in His gracious keeping I confidently entrust the guilty city. Nineveh is needy! but "I knew that Thou art a gracious God, and full of compassion, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy, and repentest Thee of the evil" . . . "and therefore I hasted to flee unto Tarshish!" Here is an extraordinary mental succession; a gloriously rich conception of Deity used to justify a flagrant neglect of duty; here is indolence finding its sustenance and justification in grace. Let me suggest to you a rather startling Scriptural parallelism. In one of our Lord's parables He opens out a man's mind and reveals to us quite another conception of Deity than

the one upon which we have just gazed. "I knew Thee." He begins almost after the manner of Jonah—"I knew thee that thou art a hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed." And what will be the issue of such conception, a conception of austerity and tyranny—a Pharaoh on the throne? "And I went and buried thy talent in the earth." The conception of unjust austerity found its issue in moral sterility. A man's conception of Deity is used to justify a deliberate neglect of duty. But here is the amazing coincidence, that the issues of the two conceptions are the same, while the conceptions are infinitely divergent. "Therefore I hasted to flee unto Tarshish," and duty was ignored! "I went and buried thy talent," and duty was ignored! And yet one had its origin in tyranny, the other had its origin in grace. There must be something rotten in the premise when there is something so unhallowed in the conclusion. But before we make further quest into the roots of the reasoning let us mark its vital connection with some of the thought of our own time. "Arise, go to Nineveh!" It was a call to the foreign field. It was the foreigner, the stranger, the far-away man, who was in peril, in darkness, in need. And it was foreign service that was disregarded, or say excused, on the plea that all men had to deal with a gracious, and merciful, and all-compassionating God. "It will be all right with the Ninevites! The sword of Damocles is not sus-

pended above them! Their sky is not black with imminent storm, pregnant with the thunders and lightnings of an outraged God. Their sky, like ours, is brimming with grace, and His banner over them is love. There is nothing urgent in their condition; 'He is slow to anger and plenteous in mercy.'" We can go leisurely about our ministries; there is no call for haste!

I ask you—is there not something modern in the ancient reasoning? Let us look at the practical logic by which our conduct is determined. A hundred years ago men held very different conceptions of the needs and perils of the foreign field to those which are commonly held to-day. The conception of God was more awful, more austere, more severe. The conception of hell was more appalling, irreparable, full of final destruction. To be ignorant of God was to be lost. The heathen—the men of Nineveh—were regarded as sliding, in countless multitudes, into an inevitable and hopeless hell. Men used to make appalling calculations, and they would alarm their audiences by telling them how many were passing, with every tick of the clock, into irretrievable perdition. The state of the foreign field was looked upon with all the urgency with which we look upon a rudderless and broken ship, held in the grip of mighty tempestuous seas, with man after man dropping numb from the rigging into the engulfing deep. And foreign mission work was life-boat work, and the boat was launched, and men went out to

save imperilled brethren on the tremendous seas of common life! And O, the urgency of it, and the sacrifice of it, and the heroism of it! And O, the joy of it, and the shoutings of it, when the life-boatmen came ashore again, and told the story of salvation, effected on far-off and desolate seas! And so, when men are drowning, their saviours speed upon their mission, and the pleasure trip to Tarshish is delayed.

But now, in many ways, for better or worse, the thought of the Church has changed. We have taken the frown out of the sky, and we have removed the peril out of the deep. We no longer think of the heathen as dropping by shoals into unillumined and hopeless night. If they drop from the rigging at all, they fall, not into engulfing seas, but into "the everlasting arms!" And because that hell has closed her mouth, and mercy's gates are opened wide, we feel that the urgency has gone out of the mission, and that the strain of care and sacrifice can be eased. We no longer go out as life-boats—to save souls, but as teachers to enlighten minds; no longer to visit possible wrecks, but to beautify the boats whose certain haven is their Father's land. Our emphasis has changed; we know that "He is a gracious God, and full of compassion, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy," and the missionary fleetness has gone out of our steps.

That was Jonah's reasoning, and I say it is allied to a similar reasoning which is commonly prevalent

in our time, a reasoning which is tragically and pathetically untrue, and which must crucify the Son of God afresh. It means that hell has more motive power than heaven, and that fear has more constraint than grace. But have they? Let us come to the very crux of the problem, and let us root out the loose and rotten elements in the reasoning. Is fear mightier than grace, and does it endow the soul with fleeter and stronger wings? "I knew that Thou art a gracious God." He knew little or nothing about it! That is the hiatus in his reasoning. That is the rottenness in his conclusion. He knew little or nothing about the grace and mercy of the Lord. He had an opinion about it, but he had no deep experimental knowledge of its enriching and inspiring power. "I knew!" He was using a great word with painfully superficial meaning. In the Old and New Testament knowledge is a word of unspeakably deep significance, reaching away to the infinite. "If a man say, I *know* God, and keep not His commandments, he is a liar." "This is . . . life, to *know!*" To know is to live, to share the life of Him we know. Will you mark the shining peak of this towering aspiration of the Apostle Paul? "What things were gain to me, these have I counted loss for Christ. Yea, verily, and I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung . . . that I may *know* Him!" The superlative glory

which awaits him in the beatific light is this, "Then shall I know even as also I am known."

The cardinal element in spiritual knowledge is not a well-arranged theology, but a religious experience. A well-arranged theology may be like a herbalist's dry museum; a religious experience has about it the life and beauty and fragrance of a "well-watered garden." To have really known the gracious God is to have tasted and seen how gracious He is, and to go about with the taste in the mouth, an ever-pleasant and refreshing inspiration. And there is this sure mark—I think it is the hall-mark upon all the grace-blest children of God, that they are keenly desirous that others should share their experience, and should roam and feed in the garden of their own soul's delight. The grace-blessed child can never tarry comfortably in the garden alone: his own joys are multiplied when others are plucking fruit from the same tree.

This is his cry to those without, "I sat down under his trees, and he has satisfied my mouth with good things!" "O taste and see that the Lord is good!" "Taste and see!" And why? Because in this sphere the taster becomes the advertiser. The experimentalist becomes the herald. The disciple becomes the apostle, inevitably and spontaneously, for every soul added to the kingdom becomes the witness of his Saviour's praise. To know the grace of God is inevitably to become its messenger. I am not afraid of a broadened conception of the

love and grace of the Lord if only men are in the Lord's garden and living on His fruits. Every guest will be a missioner, who will go out into the highways and hedges, intent on multiplying the guests, and the sphere of his enterprise will be as wide as the world. Eaten grace makes one hungry for service. Missionary work will need no urging when the Church takes her meals at the enriching and blood-making table of the Lord. What I do fear is, that we should sing of a grace that we have not known. I am afraid of that merely theoretical and drugging conception of grace which makes us easy about the needs and perils of Nineveh, and which relaxes the thews and sinews of a masculine sense of duty. Let us judge the reality of our discipleship by the intensity of our apostleship. Let us measure our knowledge of grace by the quality of our sentiments towards Nineveh. "In Christ Jesus there is neither Jew nor Gentile." He who has tasted the Lord loves the race. Jonah thought well of God, and neglected man.

"And the word of the Lord came unto Jonah *the second time.*" Oh, the mercy hidden in those three closing words! "*The second time!*" That God should give us a second chance! The mercy of it, as a multitude can testify! And Jonah, after tragic and sorrowing experience, after distress and providence which had brought him into deeper intimacy with his Maker's will, heard the call "the second time." "Arise, go unto Nineveh, and preach!"

"So Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord." And what happened? He found that this weary, heart-sickened, sinful people had a secret aching bias towards God! They listened to his message, they heeded it, they absorbed it, they obeyed it. They "turned from their evil ways," they set their sin-marred, sorrow-worn faces toward heaven, and cried mightily unto God. While this man had been idly journeying to Tarshish, this people had been secretly wearying for God. And is not the coincidence modern? With all my soul I believe that the secret heart of the people is aweary-ing for our Lord and Christ.

XI

THE DOOM OF NINEVEH

The book of Nahum is a little book, bound up within the covers of the Old Testament, and probably the majority of us know as little about it as we do of some antiquated State document crumbling away in a dusty cellar of the British Museum. The little book is 2,500 years old, and yet it is by no means mouldy or mouldering. Put it side by side with a chapter of Carlyle's "French Revolution," and there is nothing fusty about it, nothing yellow, withered, or obsolete. Indeed, I am greatly impressed with its modernity. In many respects it is more modern than our daily press, and if you could compare it with the very last chapter of British history, as written by the recording angel himself, you would see at once that it is quite up to date. And, therefore, I do not hold up before you, between finger and thumb, a ragged remnant of musty story. I bring you a leaf which has not withered, a fresh leaf from that book of life whose continued story, with all its tragedy and judgment, we are busy writing to-day.

And what is the little book about? It tells the graphic story of "the decline and fall" of Nineveh, that great world-power, with its seething popula-

tion, with its flaming greed of gain, and with its vast trading arms stretching out to grasp the far-off treasures of the earth. I am not so foolish as to attempt to show close analogies between Nineveh and Britain. The parallels cannot be drawn. Amid many similarities there are fundamental contrasts, contrasts in religion, contrasts in morals, contrasts in quality of patriotism, and, not least, contrasts in that unique power of colonisation which has isolated Britain from all the rest of the world. And yet, the causes which have built or ruined empires build and ruin them still. The sins and negligences, which in other days have consumed the secret strength of the individual, are fierce and corrosive still. And, therefore, it will not be ill-spent time if we peep through this bit of ancient history, and watch the forces of doom as they execute sentence upon the sin and folly of a great imperial state.

What, then, was the moral condition of Nineveh as it is portrayed for us in this little book? There is one passage, brief and pregnant, swift as a lightning flash, and in its vivid gleam four things stand revealed and named: "lies," "robbery," "witchcrafts," and "filth," and it is round about these festering presences that the prophet beholds the gathering forces of doom. Let us look at them.

"Woe to the bloody city! It is all full of *lies!*" It is not without suggestion that the word which is thus translated "lies" signifies a presence which has become emaciated and thin. Truth is no longer

solid; it has become a veneer. Goodness is no longer sterling silver; it is only silver-plated. Rectitude has become an iridescent film, a mere dressing for human affairs, a moral cosmetic. Truth has become thin. It is no longer profound. It is a superficial skin, and not a cubical reality. Truth is acted, it is no longer lived. It is a graceful form, and not a dependable spirit. It is a well-dressed courtesy, concealing purposes as black and gruesome as the tomb. Yes, in old Nineveh truth had become very thin. And this emaciation had been primarily produced by two things. First, by the greed of gain, which always makes men specious, and plausible, and tricky, inciting them to any manner of outward seemliness in the interests of prosperous enterprise. Yes, truth was a very skinny presence in the Assyrian markets. And the second cause of her emaciation was the love of display. Nineveh had got it into its head that fine feathers do make fine birds, and there was a most feverish competition for the gaudiest show. And so the Ninevites had somehow got hold of the hues of the kingfisher, and the homely crow had picked up the peacock's plumes, and was most laboriously acquiring its strut and stride! And thus society had become unnatural, artificial, a company of actors wearily acting their parts, and "truth had fallen in the street."

"Woe to the bloody city, it is all full of lies, and *robbery.*" When falsehood is practised, injustice will be wrought. The two cannot be divorced.

When truth becomes thin, life will become cruel. Enthrone artifice and you stupefy conscience. When we lose the sense of the beauty of truth we lose our sense of the grandeur of right; and with the sense of right goes the recognition of rights, and life becomes a cockpit, a weird scene of moral chaos. That is a sequence as sure and inevitable as any succession in the realm of matter. Let falsehood reign in business and in manners, and most assuredly life will become harsh and hard, and the weakest in the land will become the helpless victims of raw injustice and oppression.

"Woe to the bloody city, it is all full of lies, and robbery, . . . and is *the mistress of witchcrafts.*" That is to say, she acknowledges no abiding moral sovereignty. The moral decrees are as capricious as herself. There is no unchanging imperative, as irresistible as the march of the stars. And, therefore, she resorted to spells and enchantments, and witchcrafts, and she enthroned her own trickery and artificiality in the seats of the highest. There was nothing steady, nothing dependable, nothing sure. Her moral world was a world of chance and caprices, and everything would be "as luck would have it."

And the last item unfolded in this dark portrayal of natural life is the widespread presence of "*filth.*" You can expect no other. With life conceived as a lucky-bag, and everything a lottery, and truth emaciated to mere pretence, and cruel injustice rampant, you may surely expect an aggressive animalism

to ride triumphantly through the state. "Iniquity gathereth iniquity unto itself"; dirt makes dirt; and, in spite of all its pomp and glittering speciousness, in the eyes of its God Nineveh was unclean.

But with its "lies," and "robbery," and "witchcrafts," and "filth," Nineveh was possessed of mighty material resources. She was engirt by massive, towering walls of apparently invulnerable strength. She was possessed by an army as terrible and brutal "as was ever suffered to roll its forces across the world." Assyriology has unearthed miles of sculpture which portrayed endless processions of soldiers, abundantly armed with all the martial equipment of the ancient world. You can see and hear the goings of her soldiery in the graphic pages of our prophet; "mighty men," carrying shields red with blood; "valiant men in scarlet"; "chariots with flaming torches" rushing along the roads; prancing horses, and "rattling of wheels"; "bright sword," and "glittering spear"! And spoil upon spoil, spoil of silver and spoil of gold! And behind these vast walls, on which the chariots raced, and protected by this tremendous array, the Ninevites lived—in lies, and cruelty, and witchcraft, and filth; and in their prosperity they said, "We shall never be moved."

"*And the Lord . . .!*" Ay, what about Him? What has this little, fragile, old-world document to tell us about Him? Well, I have read the little book through a dozen times, and I will tell you what

lifts itself up pre-eminent above everything else in my mind, amid all the comings and goings of armies, amid all the heated, artificial hurryings of the city. What strikes me is the extraordinary aliveness of the eternal God. The God of Nahum is no absentee deity, aloof and apathetic, dwelling afar off in the lotus-land of a distant heaven. Mark the prophet's phraseology which describes this extraordinary aliveness of the eternal God: "God is jealous"; "the Lord revengeth"; "the Lord hath His way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of His feet"; "He rebuketh the sea, and maketh it dry, and drieth up all the rivers; Bashan languisheth, and Carmel, and the flower of Lebanon languisheth!"; "the mountains quake at Him, and the hills melt, and the earth is burned in His presence!" Conceive that sublime procession of the Eternal round about their gaudy, seedy, glittering city! It is like the wild whirl of the elements when Lady Macbeth was creeping about her bloody work in Duncan's chamber. But come nearer still. "The Lord is furious: the Lord will take vengeance on His adversaries"; "Who can stand before His indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of His anger?" You may call that anthropomorphic, if you will. You may make whatever discount you please. At any rate, it is a real and not a painted God, and it has a moral relevancy to real men and moral needs. I know there is an exquisitely sweet passage in the very next verse, such a passage as I

love to find, but never feel quite safe in taking away: "The Lord is good: a stronghold in the day of trouble; and He knoweth them that trust in Him." We all feel the soft graciousness of the words. And how violent the contrast! "The Lord is furious!" That is like the terrible flame of Vesuvius. "The Lord is good!" That is like the luxuriant vines which clothe its lower slopes. But the flame and the vine are from the same mountain, and the fury and the goodness are of the same God. If there were no fury there could be no goodness: if there were no holiness there could be no grace. If God were never angry He could never love. If God can trifle with sin He is neither holy nor good. If God cannot be angry with Nineveh there is no "great white throne," and moral sovereignty is destroyed. But there are two words of the Lord, as spoken by the lips of His prophet, which express the Divine attitude to sin in ways which I think I can never forget, and they are these: "I am against thee!" "I will make thy grave, for thou art vile." Such is the God of Judgment, in the midst of the imperial city.

Now look at the working out of the judgment, as unveiled by the prophet Nahum. I am impressed with the apparent leisureliness of the process. "The Lord is slow," cries the prophet; yes, a slow fire is the fire of judgment. "Slow to anger!" Judgment does not leap with the spring of a lion: it moves like the locust and the cankerworm. "It shall eat

thee up like the cankerworm." See, then, the slow, sure process of the judgment.

It first eats away the wits. "*Thou shalt be drunken!*" Have you never seen that happen in the individual life, when the long-continued process of sin has deprived a man of his wits, and he has lost the sense of moral drift, and he no longer realises where he is or whither he is going? So shall it be with states and empires. "Thou shalt be drunken." The wages of sin is a certain stupefaction. "The Lord hath poured upon them the spirit of a deep sleep." It was even so, our Master tells us, in the wicked days before the flood. They were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, *and they knew not!*" The sins of a people induce a spirit of sleep. They become numb to the lessons of history. They become blind to the signs of the times, and they become deaf to the sound of the approaching judgment, whose chariots are even now rumbling across the plains. The cankerworm eats away their wits, and they sleep.

But in this process of judgment, not only are the wits consumed, the cankerworm also eats away an empire's masculine strength. What fearful irony is in the prophetic challenge: "Where is the lion, the old lion, and the lion's whelp," whom none could make afraid? Where is the lion, the lion-element in the state, the invincible majesty of royal character? Eaten away by the cankerworm of judg-

ment. Nineveh retained the lion's skin, and the lion's roar, but it had lost the lion, and in the day of crisis it was revealed as weak and timid as a hare. Nineveh could not retain the lion-like virtue in conditions of falsehood, robbery, witchcraft and filth. The lion lost his heart, and was led about with a string. The masculine strength was gone. "And it shall come to pass that all they that look upon thee shall say, Nineveh is waste!" Will any prophet in some coming day face our British Empire and say, "Where is the lion, the old lion, whom none could make afraid?"

And so the process of judgment proceeded apace, until in the long run the material defences proved as flimsy as a paper shield. Her walls were softened at the foundations, and her mighty palaces were dissolved. "All thy strongholds shall be like fig trees with the first ripe figs; if they be shaken they shall even fall into the mouth of the eater." Her vast army degenerated into a display of uniformed weakness, and her clamorous pomp was silenced and humiliated in a night. "And I will cast abominable filth upon thee, and make thee vile, and will set thee as a gazing-stock. And all that look upon thee shall flee from thee, and say, Nineveh is laid waste!"

She hath met her doom!

What significance has all this for thee and me? Even this. To warn us to retain the friendship of God. To warn us that clean habits are a finer

defence than strong walls. To warn us to erect the Lord's plumb-line in the home and in the state, and to build by its counsel. To warn us to "seek first" that righteousness which alone exalteth a nation. To warn us to seek our strength and treasure in noble character. Its significance is to warn us to play the real man if we would abide unshaken.

"The tumult and the shouting dies:
The captains and the kings depart:
Still stands thine ancient sacrifice,
A humble and a contrite heart.
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget."

"Far-called, our navies melt away:
On dune and headland sinks the fire.
Lo, all our pomp of yesterday
Is one with Nineveh and Tyre!
Judge of the nations, spare us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget."

XII

SOUND IN PATIENCE

"Sound in patience."—TITUS ii. 2.

That is not the usual standpoint from which we estimate the soundness of our fellows. The test is frequently credal, and a man's soundness is ascertained from the quantity and quality of his beliefs. Or the test is ecclesiastical, and soundness is sought in a man's connection with some one or other of our many visible organisations. When men speak of soundness in religious relationships the judges are rarely found investigating the realm of moral issues. But the apostle takes us to quite another point of view. Here soundness is estimated not by length of creed, but by length of patience; not by the number of articles in our mental professions, but by the powers of endurance in our ordinary tempers; not by the abundance of our confessions, but by the tenacity and intensity of our continuance.

Well, now, how should we stand this form of scrutiny? If we were judged according to our creeds, the majority of us might pass the examination with honours. But how should we fare if the judgment were to busy itself with the soundness of our tempers? For experience makes it abundantly evident that

credal soundness may co-exist with diseased and waspish dispositions. Orthodoxy in belief may live in the same house with a very repellent heterodoxy in manners. A man may contend for a fine orthodoxy with a temper which reveals him to be a boor. And the same indictment may be made against many men who boast of their heterodoxy; they support their heterodoxy with a bitterness and a virulence which make it very clear that broad theories about the vineyard can be allied with an exceedingly nasty and unattractive vintage. And therefore do I say that multitudes who might pass the credal test would fail at the test of the temper. And the same pathetic collapse might be the lot of many who are proud of their ecclesiastical soundness. The pages of history have made the ecclesiastics' temper notorious, and contemporary history is by no means changing the record. The ecclesiastical battlefield is almost invariably the exhibition-ground of short and hasty tempers. We contend for the soundness of our -isms with an almost riotous display of the unsoundness of our patience. And, therefore, I think it is a striking warning which the apostle gives us when he diverts our attention to this possible heterodoxy of temper, and teaches us that one of the main essentials of a healthy and progressive life is found in the possession of a strong and invincible patience.

Now the Apostle Paul has himself been described by a great Biblical student as "Paul the undiscourageable." And, indeed, he is worthy of the

name, and there is no better way of studying the significance of his teaching than by watching his own life. He is his own best commentary on his own counsels. His purposes were frequently broken by tumultuous shocks. His plans were destroyed by hatred and violence. His course was twisted here, diverted there, and wrenched a hundred times from its appointed goings by the mischievous plots of wicked men. The little churches he had founded were in chronic disturbance and unrest. They were often infested with puerilities, and sometimes they were honeycombed by heresies which consumed their very life. And yet how sound and noble his patience! With what fruitful tenderness he waits for his lagging pupils! His very reproofs are given, not with the blind, clumsy blows of a street mob, but with the quiet, discriminating hand of a surgeon. This man, more than most men, had proved the hygienic value of endurance, and he, more than most men, was competent to counsel his fellow-believers to discipline themselves to the "soundness of patience."

Let us, therefore, look a little more closely at the virtue. This virtue of patience is to be exercised in seasons of waiting. This is certainly the hardest and most exacting exercise. I suppose that the rarest form of courage is displayed when we are compelled to sit still, and things are happening in which we can take no part. Action would reduce the tension and bring relief, but action is impossible.

We have an example of this in the awful mining calamity which has recently desolated so many homes in the United States. It required one kind of courage and one kind of patience to descend the uncertain mine and work away at the accumulated *débris* in the dubious hope of finding the buried men alive. But the women above, the wives of the buried men, standing there through day and night, able to do nothing but wait—these needed a finer type of patience and courage. I do not wonder that when the managers asked the poor afflicted souls to get a shed ready for the possible reception of recovered men, and to prepare bedding and food, the terrible tension was relieved and comfort was found in ministry. It is the same in the life of a soldier. The acutest strain is not in the fighting, but in perilous waiting when fighting is impossible. And so it is in common life, in common trouble and distress. Our severest test is when we are in the midst of a serious campaign and our ammunition is spent. It is when a loved one is sick, and the ailment is absolutely beyond our ministry. It is when a dear one has gone astray, and we can think of nothing more to do to recover him. It is in seasons like these that the finest courage and the ripest patience display their superlative glory. "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flocks shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; yet

will I rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." This is surely a supreme instance of the virtue of being "sound in patience."

But the virtue of patience is also to be exercised in seasons of activity. The army needs patience in waiting; it also needs patience in fighting. Impatience can spoil the waiting, and impatience can spoil the fighting. Impatient action defeats its own ends. An impatient shot registers a very erratic mark. An impatient batsman throws away the game. Yes, we require patience in the field as well as in the pavilion. And so it is a general principle in life; patience is not something to be called up merely in hours of enforced indolence; it is not a stand-by in emergencies; it is the virtue which endows every moment with promise, and which makes the most commonplace action healthily effective.

Now let me mention two or three conditions in life in which this "sound patience" would operate with splendid effectiveness.

First of all, then, we need a "sound patience" when we are *in the presence of oppressive mysteries.* There is no one who does any thinking at all who has not entered the dark, cold, chilling circle of apparently insoluble mystery. It may be the burdensome presence of immediate and palpable realities, such as the presence of suffering and pain. Or it may be those problems lying upon the borderland, or well within that mysterious realm where we seem to have neither eyes nor ears, hands nor feet; the mystery

of God, the mystery of Providence, the mystery of Jesus Christ—His incarnation, His resurrection, His glorification, His relation to sin, and hope, and human endeavour, and the veiled to-morrow; and all the great pressing problems of human birth, and human life, and human destiny. What shall we do with them? Or, what shall we not do with them? Let us make it an essential in all our assumptions that a pre-requisite to all discovery is a "sound patience." Do not let us deal with them as though they were Christmas puzzles, to be taken up at odd moments and cursorily examined, and then thrown aside again in irritation and impetuous haste. I am frequently amazed how hastily men and women drop these things; they "cannot be bothered with them," and so they retreat into a perilous indifference or into a fruitless agnosticism. George Eliot dropped her vital faith in the course of eleven days. Robert Elsmere dropped his vital faith with almost equal celerity. I heard from one young fellow who was burning all his boats and refusing henceforth to sail these vast, mysterious, glorious seas, and all because he had read a little pamphlet of not more than fifty pages from cover to cover! Now I want to suggest to the young people to be patient in the presence of mystery, and to assume that patience itself is one of the great instruments of exploration and discernment and interpretation. I want to suggest that patience itself is power, spiritual power, both perceptive and receptive, and that the very possession

of patience gives us the requisite medium for beholding the glory of the Lord. Do not stake your spiritual destiny on the throw of the dice! Do not let one month's hasty reading turn your backs upon the undiscovered glories of the spiritual world. Whatever else you lack, do not lack patience! Be "sound in patience." "Let patience have her perfect work." "In patience ye shall win your souls."

And, secondly, we need a "sound patience" *in the presence of burdensome disappointment.* Some glowing purpose has been suddenly frustrated. Some bit of fond work has been rudely broken. We suffer profound disappointment. And disappointment is apt to kindle irritation, and when that fire begins to burn much valuable furniture is in danger of being consumed. When irritation is blazing fine resolution is apt to be destroyed, and very speedily an enterprising life is changed into a dull and smouldering indifference. In many a life this is the last melancholy chapter of what might have been a noble and inspiring biography. The knight's chivalrous career is spoiled through lack of a solid patience. I remember reading the life of Principal Rainy, whom his biographer classes with Gladstone and Newman as the three outstanding British figures in the latter half of the nineteenth century. I suppose that one of the greatest crises in Rainy's life was when the House of Lords delivered judgment in the appeal case between the "Wee Frees" and the United Free Church of Scotland. Rainy had given the

strength of his life to the Free Church, and his matured powers had been consecrated in promoting vital and corporate union between his own Church and the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland. A disaffected minority disagreed, and claimed the entire material heritage of the Free Church—its churches, its manses, its colleges, its funds. The case was taken to the Lords, and the Lords gave judgment against the United Free Church, and therefore against Dr. Rainy. It seemed as though his majestic vision were to be only a temple built in dreams! He was in the Lords when judgment was given. He was standing by Mr. Haldane, whose guest he was in London. Mr. Haldane says that on the way home Rainy never spoke a word. When they reached home he sat down and then quietly said: "I wish I were ten years younger!" No anger, no harsh resentment, no bitterness, no unholy fire! "I wish I were ten years younger!" There was no need that he were younger. He quietly and strongly set to work again to bring order out of confusion, and a nobler union out of the very discord and disruption. Surely Robert Rainy was "sound in patience"! And if I address these words to any whose fine bit of work is lying like a shivered vase upon the floor, let me tenderly counsel him to begin again; aye, to try again, and without bitterness and in "sound patience" prove that he was worthy of the better thing he sought.

And, in a further application, let me say that we

need a "sound patience" *in the presence of a loitering progress.* Things are walking, and we want them to run. Or, they are running and we want them to fly! We hear one another say: "Things don't go fast enough for me!" Or "Things are too slow for me!" And we become irritated, and then irritable, and we lose our patience, and in losing our patience we lose the very spirit and instrument of progress. How true this is in our relationship to little children, and especially to little children who are not highly gifted, and who have the misfortune to be dull-witted and slow! How fatal is the mistake to become impatient with them! To become impatient is to deprive them of the very atmosphere they require for journeying at all; impatience never converts dull-wittedness into quick-wittedness, and the teacher or the parent who becomes impatient is robbing the child of its heritage, increasing its load of disadvantage, and making its little pilgrim journey prematurely dark and hard. Let us in this matter cultivate a "sound patience"; whatever else we lack, let us see to it that we are not lacking here. It is worth while; yes, wonderfully worth while! Dull children may open slowly, but the loitering opening often brings a great surprise. It sometimes happens that the last becomes first, and the belated arrival justifies all the patience that awaited his appearing.

And so the principle might accompany us in application to all the many-coloured relationships in life where demand is made upon the powers of endur-

ance. "Sound patience" is always a good investment. In the presence of a civilisation which moves upward with slow and leaden feet, or in the presence of an impulsive enthusiasm which squanders its treasure in thoughtless speed, sound patience always pays. And in the presence of bereavement, when daylight fades, and twilight reigns, when the sore heart is tempted to believe that the day's labour is done, and begins to put its tools away, believe me, sound patience pays.

"Rest comes at length, though life be long and dreary,
The day must dawn, and darksome night be past,
All journeys end in welcomes to the weary,
And heaven, the heart's true home, shall come at last."

But what is our hope of patience? Where is our resource? How can we hold out? Here is the beginning of the secret. "*He endured!*" "If we suffer *with Him.*" It is in fellowship with Him, and in Him only, that we become triumphant. The resources of the patient Lord are offered to those who seek to live the patient life. "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit." "The meek will He guide in judgment, and the meek will He teach the way." The Lord of patience will bestow His own healing virtue upon the waiting soul.

"Dear Lord and Father of mankind,
Forgive our feverish ways!
Reclothe us in our rightful mind:
In purer lives Thy service find,
In deeper reverence, praise!"

XIII

THE SECRET OF MORAL PROGRESS

"I will run the way of Thy commandments, when Thou shalt enlarge my heart."—Ps. cxix. 32.

"The way of Thy commandments." To many people not an attractive road! It is suggestive of fences, and trespassing boards, of curbs and restraints. It is a road which is hedged about on every side with prohibitions, and its liberties are just the guarded freedom of a school walking out under the vigilance of a stern and severe control. I stood a little while ago in a little village church, where on one side of the chancel the Ten Commandments were inscribed, and on the other side the beatitudes, and I felt in passing from one to the other that I had changed from the imprisoning restrictions of the winter into the warm expansiveness of the spring. I do not say that my feelings were healthy; I do not think they were; for a deeper sensitiveness would have probably appreciated the more vital relationship, and the two temperatures would have been felt to be more akin. But it is true that we recoil from the commandments and incline to the beatitudes. The majority of us experience no particular allurement in the contemplation of a skeleton, but, after all, the skeleton is the inevitable framework on which

the more winsome figure is built. And so in passing from the commandments to the beatitudes I was but passing from the bald and essential skeleton on which these finer and softer graces can be laid. But, even with all this, the way of the commandments is not an attractive and inspiring road. To mention only one thing, our resentment stiffly rises against the very name. If the imperative came to us in the guise of a gracious counsel, a delicate suggestion, or a soft constraint, we might be subdued by the wooing note; but when it comes to us with the rigid features of a commandment we stoutly resent the stern approach. "When the commandment came," says the Apostle Paul, "sin revived," sin stood up in bold hostility, and plunged me into deeper shame. "When the commandment came, sin revived"; no, we do not like it; pilgrimages to Sinai are very infrequent, pilgrimages to Calvary are happening every day.

"The way of Thy commandments." Through the Christian Scriptures the way becomes steeper and more uninviting to the natural man as the centuries move along. The gradient of the moral ideal becomes increasingly precipitous. You may get up the lower and earlier slopes, but when you get to Amos and Hosea and Isaiah the track becomes exceeding steep, until when you get to the Lord Himself the radiant ideal lifts itself sheer and clear as the Matterhorn. "I looked then after Christian to see him go up the hill, where I perceived he fell

from running to going, and from going to clambering upon his hands and his knees because of the steepness of the place." Yes, the way becomes very steep as we draw near the Lord! His commandments cover not only deed but purpose, not only achievement but intention; they pass from the negative to the positive, and in the transition the altitude is immeasurably heightened. Passion is now judged, not by the measure of its destructiveness, but by the intensity of its flame. The duty of a balanced retaliation is changed into a beneficent ministry. Love is no longer a benign passivity, but an active crusade. Take the teachings of our Lord, map out the way of His commandments, make a contour map of the road, and you will find that you are face to face with a shuddering ascent, an ascent so stiff and steep that some declare it to be the dream of a visionary, the moral prospectus of a fanatic, proclaiming imperatives which are unpractical and impracticable. The moral ideal of Jesus is just overwhelming; so much so, that many do with it as the Swiss did in the olden times with the Alps, build their houses with their backs to the towering heights, and they face the lowlands of human expediency and moral commonplace.

Now let me remind you that the word "heart" has a much wealthier significance than we commonly attach to it to-day. The symbolic significance of the word in our own day is confined almost exclusively to the emotions. If we say that a man has a big

heart we do not refer to the range of his thought, but to the quality of his sympathies. If we say that a man has no "heart" we mean that the channels of feeling are as dry as a river bed in time of drought. Nay, we even bring the brain and the heart into distinct and isolated positions. We say that a man has not very much brain, but that he has a very big heart. Now all these modern distinctions must be laid aside when we seek the interpretation of the word of God. I am not aware that the word "brain" or "brains" ever occurs in the Bible. According to the primitive physiology of those times the heart was the mysterious seat of thought as well as of feeling. The heart was "the seat of man's collective energies, the very focus of his personal life." All the great elements in personality which psychology has discovered and named had their pre-eminent seat in the heart; the heart was the throne in the individual empire. And therefore the "heart" is inclusive of the intellectual, the emotional, the volitional, all that is now signified by thought and feeling and will. When, therefore, the Psalmist declares that he will "run the way" of God's commandments when God shall "enlarge" his heart, he is thinking of something far more than the enrichment of sentiment, he is contemplating the heightening and deepening and broadening of his entire being, when

> "Mind and soul, according well,
> May make one music as before,
> But vaster,"

every part of the life being energised and strengthened by the gracious influences of the eternal God. Moral speed will come with spiritual enlargement.

"I will run . . . when Thou shalt enlarge my heart." When Thou shalt enlarge my *thought!* Many of us go slowly because we do not see far. There is no long range of purpose in our eyes, and therefore our feet are sluggish. Our imaginations are not peopled with the glories of attainment, and therefore there is no eager haste in our steps. Napoleon got his men over the Alps by richly sharing with them the promises and purposes of the campaign. Their eyes were filled with the resplendent riches of Italian cities even while they were contending with the stupendous obstacles of the trackless wastes of snow. Their thoughts included the sunny Italian plains as well as the grimness of the immediate toil, and that forward-cast of the eyes gave strength and inspiration to their labours. "I will run the way of Thy commandments when Thou shalt enlarge my" *thought,* when my mind is filled with Thy blessed purposes, when even now the eyes of my imagination rove over the celestial fields, and when even now I feel something of the warmth and liberty of the coming noon. That is what we need if we are ever to run. We need enlargement of thought, range of vision, we need to keep the goal in our eyes from the very first step on the difficult way. The goal has not been hid. The ultimate purpose is not obscure.

"All things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you." "We have the mind of Christ." Our minds may be expanded to take in the glorious purpose, and eyes that are held in that vision will most assuredly communicate buoyancy and speed to the feet. Look at the Apostle Paul. The far-off goal was always flinging its kindly ray upon the immediate task. That "far-off divine event" was ever in his eyes, and the light of its glory pierced through the murkiness and oppressiveness of the immediate day. "No chastening for the present seemeth joyous; nevertheless afterward . . . !" Is not that like Napoleon's soldiers with the sunlit Italian plains in their eyes? "This light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at things that are seen but at the things which are not seen!" Ay, that is the enlarged mind, which in its inclusive range gives hospitality to the ultimate, and brings the glory of the far-away to relieve the burdensomeness of the present task. That's the way to get over the hill, and to get over it at a run! What is the philosophy of it? It is this. Small and exclusive thinking is like a closed and tiny room, in which the inmates become asphyxiated, and reduced to lassitude and languor. Large thinking oxygenates the powers, it lets in the vitalising wind from the far-stretching moors of truth, all the faculties are toned and braced into strenuousness, and they can move in difficult ways with ease.

There came a day in the life of John Wesley when his thought was indefinitely enlarged; far-off goals became luminous, pervading purposes became clear; and that expanded mind imparted such strenuousness to his feet that henceforth life was a glorious race, speeding here and there, in face of difficulties inconceivable, but ever in the way of the Lord's commandments. "I will run the way of Thy commandments when Thou shalt enlarge my thought," when the quickening light and fire of Thine own purpose expands and possesses my mind.

It may be, too, that further enlargements are required before the desired speed is obtained. Should we not need, perhaps, to emphasise this particular element with reference to some men's needs? "I will run the way of Thy commandments when Thou shalt enlarge my *emotions.*" The mill will not work if the mill-race is empty! The weakness of many a life is explained by the poverty of its emotions; the emotional energy is only that of a reduced and languid stream, and there is no power to run the mill. There are lives that are seemingly destitute of any great capacity to be deeply stirred. Their storms are only "storms in a tea-cup"; they have nothing of the terrific movement of the disturbed sea. They cannot be moved into mighty indignation like the Apostle Paul; "who is made to stumble and I burn not?" They cannot be constrained into passionate love; "I could wish that myself were

separated from Christ for my brethren." They cannot be upheaved by sullen sorrow, nor made to dance in ecstatic joy. Their emotional life is feeble and paltry, and there is no possible storm in the scanty stream. Now see the consequence. We must not expect much speed where there is little feeling. The insensitive are not the strenuous, rather are they the victims of sluggishness and sleep. The man who has no emotional wealth will never be found among the pioneer runners in the moral way. He requires enlargement before he can run! And this very enlargement is provided for us in the grace of God. Nay, more than enlargement is provided for, even a new creation. "I will take away the stony heart and I will give thee a heart of flesh." That miracle has been performed in innumerable lives. Love has been born where indifference reigned, self-love has been turned into neighbour-love, and neighbour-love has been enlarged and transfigured into enemy-love, and this is the full explanation of the glorious change—"We love because He first loved us." When our selfishness is scooped out, there is amazing room for God. He Himself will do the scooping, and He will fill the liberated spaces with His own love, and most assuredly we shall "run the way of His commandments" when He has thus enlarged our hearts.

And so it is also with the third primary element in the contents of the heart, the factor of *the will.*

Many of us crawl and faint in the paths of the moral ideal because our wills are weak and irresolute. We can run for a while, but we fail in the "long run." We are good for a hundred yards, but we are spent at the mile. We begin well, but the end is very near. Our wills are something like the batteries of portable electric night-lights, good for so many flashes, and good for nothing more. We have volitional spasms, succeeded by a forceless lethargy. In our running we "run down," and our progress is stayed. We shall "run the way" of His commandments when God shall enlarge our wills. And—that is just one of the wonderful resources of grace. "It is God that worketh in you *to will,*" to enlarge your will, to fill it with all needful power, to make it adequate to the attainment of the far-off goal. We shall be "strengthened with all might by His Spirit in the inner man," and "our sufficiency" shall be "of God."

And so we who yearn to run in the way of His commandments, who yearn to obtain power and speed in the way of the moral ideal, must place ourselves in His hands, by the means of prayer and faith and consecration. And He will enlarge us! How the enlargement may be effected we cannot tell; it may be by ministries secret and imperceptible, it may be by ministries painful and obtrusive. "In my distress Thou hast enlarged me!" It may be done in the night! "The joy of the Lord shall be your strength"; it may be the work of the light of the

morning! However it be, the glorious change shall be begotten of God, and "His gentleness shall make us great." "I shall run the way of Thy commandments when Thou shalt enlarge my heart."

XIV

THY STRENGTH! MY STRENGTH!

"Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord!"—
Is. li. 9.

"Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Zion."—Is. lii. 1.

"Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord!" That is the cry of an exiled people to their Lord. "Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Zion!" That is the reply of the Lord to the supplicating people. A people cry to their Lord to awake: the Lord cries to His people to shake themselves from their sleep. Everything seemed to have gone against the exile. He had been defeated in battle. He had been stripped of his hereditary glory. The light of his national renown had been blown out. And here he was, languishing in despair, in the unlooseable grip of an alien people. Life had no longer for him a programme, but only a retrospect, no longer a radiant hope, but only a fading reminiscence, no longer an alluring vision, but only a distinguished history. There was no longer the Eastern light of an eager dawn in his eyes, but only the subdued and westerning splendour of a parting day. And so here he lay in captivity, and the songs of Zion had fled from his lips, and his mouth was

filled with wailing and complaint. "The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me." "Where is He that brought us up out of the sea with the shepherd of his flock? Where is He that put His Holy Spirit within us?" And now and again the exile half-turned himself in angry, hopeless cry, "Oh, that Thou wouldst rend the heavens, that Thou wouldst come down!" And again he relapsed into the low and cheerless moan: "My Lord hath forgotten me." And yet again he pierced the heaven with his searching supplication: "Awake, awake, put on Thy strength, O arm of the Lord, as in the ancient days, in the generations of old."

What will be the Lord's reply to the cry of the exile? Here it is: "Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Zion!" The Divine response is a sharp retort. "It is not thy God who sleepeth! It is thou thyself who art wrapt about in a sluggish and consuming indolence! Thou art crying out for more strength; but what of the strength thou hast? Thy trumpet is silent, and thine armour is rusting upon the walls! Thou art like a vagrant asking for help, when thou hast a full purse hidden between the covers of an idle bed! Thou art pleading for reinforcements, and thy soldiers are on the couch! Thy prayer is the supplication of a man who is not doing his best! Thou sayest, 'put on strength, O arm of the Lord!' I say to thee, 'Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Zion!' Clothe thyself in thy present powers, consecrate thine all to the pur-

pose of thy prayer, and stand forth in battle array."

I need not say that there is nothing in the Lord's response which disparages the ministry of prayer. It does, however, tend to put prayer in its right place, and to give a true apprehension of its purpose and ministry. Prayer is not a talisman, to be used as an easy substitute for our activity and vigilance. Prayer is a ministry in which our own powers can be quickened into more vigorous and healthy service. God has given us certain endowments. Certain talents are part of our original equipment. We are possessed of powers of judgment, of initiative, of sympathy; and the primary implication of all successful prayer is that these powers are willingly placed upon the altar of sacrifice. Any prayer is idle when these powers are indolent. If we are pleading with the Lord for more strength, it must be on this ground, that our present strength is well invested. Is it not true that there are many burdens which gall and oppress us, both in the individual and the common life, and we fervently supplicate God for their removal, but we do not consecrate our strength to their removal? We too frequently pray to be carried like logs, and it is the Lord's will that we should contend like men! If we would have the reinforcements, all our forces must be on the field. The condition of all efficient and fruitful prayer is the consecration of all our strength towards the answer. "Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord!" That

prayer is legitimate and wonder-working if we are ready to co-operate with the spirit of the Lord's reply, "Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Zion, put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem."

Well, now let us look about us. The principle is this—our "strength" must back our supplications. Is the backing always present? Take the matter of *our personal salvation.* A number of professedly Christian people are gathered together in the common name of the Christ. Every one is conscious how immature he is in the Divine life. We know how dim is our spiritual discernment. We know the flabby limpness of our spiritual grip. We know how few and infrequent are our brilliant conquests, and how many and common are our shameful defeats. And again and again we supplicate the Almighty: "Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord!" Is it possible that the response of the Lord may be the retort of the olden days: "Awake, awake, put on *thy* strength, O Zion"? Is it possible that the reinforcements tarry because the forces we have are drowsing in the tent? We pray the Lord to make us finer men and women, and to lead us on to purer heights, but how many of us put our "strength" into the climb? We may put a sigh into it, and an occasional tear, and a languid and half-melancholy movement, but of how many of us can it be said that we have invested our all in the business, every ounce of our energy, as the Japanese invested every ounce of their energy in the prosecu-

tion of the recent war? We are so prone to divide the old psalmist's counsel, and to pay heed to one part and to ignore the other. *"Bring unto the Lord glory!"* And so we do! We bring our *Glorias,* our doxologies, our hymns, and our anthems, and we do well, but it is a maimed and lifeless offering if, with the glory, we do not bring our strength. "Bring unto the Lord glory *and strength!*" It is in this gift of strength in our personal religion that we are so woefully deficient. We need to bring to our religion more strength of common-sense. Why, if many men were as thoughtless and haphazard in their business, as they are in their personal religion, they would be in the bankruptcy court in a year! I say we need stronger service in the matter of our personal salvation—more inventiveness, more fertility of ideas, more purpose, more steady and methodical persistence. And we need to bring a more commanding strength of will. There are some of us who, in our business life, move with the decisive trend of a bullet in its flight, but who, in the life of the closet, saunter in the drooping, uncertain wanderings of a falling feather. More strength, I say, if the closet is to become alive with reinforcements from the Infinite! So many of us would like to be saints without becoming soldiers, and the desire can never be attained. Let me tell you a story. It is taken from childhood; and the simplicities of a child often reflect the puerilities of the adult. Two little girls in the same class, one at the top and the other at

the bottom. The one at the bottom consults the one at the top. "How is it that you are always at the top of the class?" "Oh, I ask Jesus to help me!" "Then I will do the same," said the undistinguished member, and she forthwith put the counsel into practice. Next day their relative positions were unaltered, one at the top, and the other at the bottom. The consultation is renewed. "I thought you said that Jesus would help me, and here I am at the bottom again!" "Well, so He will, but how long did you work?" "Oh, I never opened a book!" "Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord!" "Awake, awake, put on thy strength," O little backward pupil! "Work out your own salvation . . . for it is God that worketh in you."

Take the matter of *the salvation of the home.* I think I may assume that there is not a father or mother reading these pages who has not, in some form or another, commended their little ones to the blessing of Almighty God. We have had our fears. We know how soon the wanderings can begin. We know how easily a perverse bias can be given to the plastic will. And we have interceded for them at the throne of grace: "Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord!" Is it possible, again I ask, that the Divine response may be a sharp but loving retort: "Put on *thy* strength"? Are we putting our "strength" into the salvation of the home? Is the moral and spiritual pulse in the house strong, vigorous, and healthy? How many of us have said to

ourselves, in calm but intense determination, "God helping me, this home shall be mightily favourable to the making of Christians! Not to the making of prigs—prigs are not begotten of a strong, bracing, spiritual climate: prigs are the creation of a luxurious and relaxing temperature—this house shall be favourable not to the making of prigs, but to the making of strong, healthy, wholesome, chivalrous saints!" I say, how many of us have registered a determination like that, or have such a determination implied in the government of our home? I do not know a better pattern of a home than Charles Kingsley's, but he brought his strength to its creation. It was a home whose moral atmosphere was like the air on Alpine heights, a home in which, in all perplexities, the only referendum was the Lord Himself, a home all of whose ministries were clothed in grace and beauty. "Put on thy strength, put on thy beautiful garments!" I do not seek to make any detailed suggestions, I would not presume to do it: all I now want is to urge that we back our prayers for our children with our own strength, and not allow our prayers to be weakened and emasculated by our comparative indolence and weakness. It is a good investment: it is worth doing; there is nothing worthier. I shall never forget hearing a long conversation between two men, one of whom had inquired of the other the size of his family. "I have ten," he said. "What a responsibility!" replied the other. To which there came at once the glad re-

sponse: "And what a privilege, for they are all workers on the side of God." Did I not say it is worth living for? No higher purpose can govern our years. "Put on thy strength, O Zion!"

And, lastly, there is the matter of *social redemption.* We are all familiar with the disturbing presences in the common life; the wretchedness which wraps people about like a chilling and soaking mist: the moral pestilence; the sin which flaunts its nakedness, and the sin which clothes itself in the garb of virtue; the sorrow that cries, and the sorrow that has no cry; the clean and the grimy poverty; the omnipresent pain. How often have we prayed for the city: "Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord!" And still, I think, there comes the Divine retort, "Put on thy strength, O Zion!" "Thy armour is rusting in the armoury! Thy resources are wasting in indolence and neglect! Use the strength thou hast before pleading for more! Reinforcements came to soldiers on the field! The five talents used shall become ten! Put on thy strength!" That is our Lord's response to us to-day in this work of social and national redemption. We abuse the privilege of prayer when we make it a minister of personal evasion and neglect. The prayer of the lips is only acceptable when it is accompanied by the strength of the hands. Have we put our "strength" into it? Are we supplicating for the removal of burdens when already we ourselves have strength to remove them? Let us look

about us. There is the sin of the city. A burden? Oh, yes, a crushing burden. A mystery? Yes, an unfathomable mystery. Shall we pray about it? Oh, yes, let us pray mightily, but only if we are willing to mightily consecrate our strength; do not let us presume to appeal to the arm of the Lord if there be no weapon in our hands. How is it with drunkenness? Can we honestly say that we have put our strength into our attack? To put on one's strength may just mean to put off one's coat! Will anybody assert for a moment that we have put our strength into the business, and by negative and positive ministries sought the sobriety of our people? "Put on thy strength, O Zion!" How is it with gambling? We all admit it to be a subtle disease in the body politic, secretly consuming the manhood and the womanhood of the realm. We all admit its ravages, among peer and peasant, the millionaire and the pauper. And I saw the other day that a prayer-meeting was called to supplicate God for our delivery! It is well to appeal to the arm of the Lord, but have we used the strength we have? Can we truthfully say we have used the weapons we have, and they have broken in our hands, and are altogether inefficient and useless? Or, again, I ask, are our weapons rusting in the hall? Do we not know that if to-morrow we were to make the publication of betting news illegal, one half the gambling in the land would cease? Why not try the weapon before falling in an assumedly impotent prostration before

the Lord? Let us come to the prayer-meeting with the weapons in our hands, and consecrate them to the service of the kingdom, and do not let us assume an impotence when part of our present resources are still unused—"Put on thy strength, O Zion!" And how is it with poverty? The grim, gaunt thing is in our midst, squalid, ominous, terrible! "Yes, where is God to allow it?" "Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord!" "Where is God to allow it?" Nay, nay, there is a prior question. Where are we to allow it? "Put on thy strength, O Zion!" Have we put our strength into it, every ounce of it? It may be that, when we have exhausted all our resources, something of poverty may still remain. It may be so, but do not let us argue about the perpetuity of the thing while our possible resources are slumbering in dishonourable neglect. It may be that, when we have done all, something of drunkenness may remain, and something of lust may remain, and something of poverty may remain; but what a plea we shall have with God, and how mighty will be our supplication, when we can come to Him and say: "O God, our armoury is empty, our reserves are all called out, our last man is on the field, our ammunition is spent, and the enemy still boasts himself in our midst! Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O arm of the Lord!" I say that kind of prayer would shake the very heavens, and we should have as our eager and willing allies the innumerable hosts of the eternal God.

'And so let us never forget that, when we pray for the salvation of the world, it is implied that we will put our strength into the cleansing and sweetening of our own little corner of the world. There is no true prayer without a full consecration.

XV

BOLDNESS

"When they beheld the boldness of Peter and John . . . they marvelled."—Acts iv. 13.

We have accomplished something when we make the world wonder! To break up its frigid indifference, to shake it out of its customary drowsiness, to startle it into an open-eyed surprise is to commence a ministry which may issue in fruitful worship. Wonder may occasion curiosity, curiosity is frequently the mother of reverence, reverence is the secret of devotion. When we have elicited men's wonder, we have taken the first step to making them pray. What was it which excited the world's wonder? "When they beheld the *boldness* of Peter and John." That is a very wealthy word, a word not suggestive of any one particular element, but of a whole treasury of spiritual content. It means presence of mind. It means freedom of speech. It means outspokenness almost to the point of bluntness. The men whom the world was contemplating had nothing about them of the panic-stricken. Their words were not stammered in fearful uncertainty. They did not indulge in weak and mincing ambiguities. They did not hide the strength of their testimony in the courtier's finesse. The outlines of their

character and confession were not dim and broken like the lineaments of some hazy moor; they stood out, clear and decisive, like the carved sky-line of a mountain range, or like the rocky headlands of a bold and well-defined coast. "When they beheld the *boldness* . . . they marvelled."

And who were the men upon whom this masculine grace was found? "When they beheld the boldness *of Peter.*" That is an astonishing conjunction! It is one of the phrases which describe the wonderful ministry of grace. It records a gospel miracle. I know that our hardest rocks, the igneous rocks, are just transformed mud, mud that has passed through the ministry of terrific fire. And here is Simon Peter, once as yielding as mud, not bearing a feather's weight, but now having passed through the discipline of flame, the fire of an intense affection, he is firm and irresistible as rock. "Thou also wast one of His disciples!" . . . "I know not the man!" That is the yielding mud! And it is this man, transformed in the very fibres of his being, who now arrests the thoughtless indifference of the world, and by the spectacle of a magnificent boldness startles it into a great surprise. "When they beheld the boldness of Peter they marvelled."

"*And of John!*" I cannot say that the artist's John very frequently conveys to me a sufficient conception of the bosom-friend of Christ. The artist usually figures him as of mild and gentle countenance, with far-away dreamy eyes, and of most

effeminate mien. Well, I think that any true portraiture of John must include some of these things: there must be a suggestion of mysticism, and in the face there must be a large and winsome gentleness to which we feel we could expose our wounds and our broken hearts; but the gentleness must not be effeminate, it must be strong and masculine, and in the face must be charactered elements with which the flippant could no more trifle than he could play with fire. If John is light he is also lightning! "And he surnamed them Boanerges, the sons of thunder!" Perhaps the character of the apostle John might find its appropriate symbol in a lovely dale in Derbyshire through which I have often strolled. There are the soft, sweet, grassy slopes, a welcome delicacy for tired feet; but, rising sheer out of the luscious green there tower the bare, stern, rocky crags, revealing to us the character of the hidden foundations in which even the quiet springy turf finds its bed and rest. John leaned on the Master's breast; he went to Patmos for his faith! "When they beheld the boldness of Peter and John . . . they marvelled."

This boldness was a phenomenon. They could not fit it into any of the current explanations. It was clear that it was not the product of the schools. It was not the fruit of culture. They "*perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men.*" "Unlearned!" Yes, that was most evident! Even their dress gave evidence of their illiteracy. They lacked

the academic gown. They did not wear the imposing robe of the scribe. Why, even in their very attire, the contrast between them and the rabbi was something like the contrast between a Cromer fisherman and an Oxford don! "Unlearned!" Certainly; their accent betrayed them! The roughness of the provincial dialect still clung to their untutored tongues. They lacked the gloss and finish of the schools. "Unlearned!" Certainly, the very subjects and emphases of rabbinical learning found no place in their speech. But more than "unlearned," they were "ignorant" men! The original word which lies behind this term "ignorant" is our English word "idiots." I do not say that it has the intensity of meaning which attaches to the word to-day, but even in that earlier day it had acquired the trend which has landed it in its present application. "Ignorant," as here employed, means a silly person, a mere layman as opposed to a ranked official, a quack as compared with a skilled physician. They could not fit these men anywhere into the hierarchy of official teachers, and so they relegated them to the ranks of the unrecognised, the mere quacks, and labelled them "unlearned and ignorant men." And yet here the men stood, with fine spiritual serenity, with an unshaken strength of assurance, with a firm definiteness of thought, with an unwonted precision of speech, and a magnificent irresistibleness of life! Schooled or unschooled this had to be accounted for! Fisherman or rabbi this character demanded expla-

nation! Here was the simple meadow, but here too was the grand, out-jutting height of splendid crag! How explain it? "When they beheld the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled."

What was the explanation of this character which so perplexed the world? You must turn back to the eighth verse, and you will find the secret. "Then Peter, *filled with the Holy Ghost!*" That is the explanation of the boldness. It is Peter plus the Infinite! A man who is filled with God can be none other than bold. It is as natural for him to be bold as it is for others to be craven, as natural to be decisive as for others to be limp. But pause by the word "filled." The entire emphasis gathers there. It is a picturesque word. It was the word that was used when the net was crammed with fishes. It was the word that was used when all the holes were levelled up, and the way was made even and plain. It was the word that was used when a substance had been steeped and soaked in the dye, and every strand and thread in the fabric had received the requisite hue. And this word, with these large inclusive relationships, is the word used to describe the infilling of these men with the Spirit of God. They were filled with the Spirit like a crammed net. Every gap and lack in their being was levelled up by the Spirit, and the whole life was even and symmetrical. And every tissue and fibre in mind and heart and soul was steeped in the Spirit, and dyed

into one all-pervasive and heavenly hue. "Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost!" Do you wonder that he was bold, and startled the onlooker? Why are we not bold? Because the filling is only partial. We touch God on one side and not on another. While these words were being written I passed from my study for a moment to another room in the house, passed from sunshine into comparative twilight, and from warmth into comparative cold. The transition is symbolic of the change one frequently experiences in passing from one side of a man's life to another. You touch him here, and he is sunny with God's presence; you touch him there, and you are struck with the chills of a cold night-wind. If we were filled with the Spirit, if every room in the great temple of the life was pervaded with heavenly light and heat, it would be possible to move from one room to another without any perceptible change of temperature. Life has many faculties, and our trouble often is that some are filled, and some are unfilled with the Spirit of God. Sometimes the conscience is God-filled, but not the affections. Sometimes the faculty of benevolence has the heavenly light, but not the imagination. Sometimes the emotions are consecrated, but not the reason and judgment. Life has many relationships, relationships in worship, in work, in recreation, relationships in the family, in society, in the State, and if we were "filled with the Holy Ghost" we could pass from one relationship to another, find God's light in

all, and there would be nothing "hid from the heat thereof." It is the partial filling which is the peril of the Christian life. It is the unfilled faculty which makes the indecisive life. It is the unhallowed relationship which makes the entire being limp and faint. When we open to God only a little we give immense advantages to the devil. It is the partial opening that makes the perilous draught; there are no draughts in the open air, where God's sweet air enwraps us about on every side. We must become enswathed, enveloped in the Holy Spirit, and allow every faculty and every relationship to be bathed in His gracious flood. Open yourself out to the Infinite, and you will put on strength and majesty like a robe! Become "filled" and you cannot help being bold! "And while they were yet praying the place was shaken wherein they were gathered together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness."

There is great and peculiar need of this apostolic "boldness" to-day. The times imperatively demand the military attitude in the soul. The Christian character must be conspicuous for strength, intelligence, decisiveness, attack. Whatever may be allowed to lie in obscurity, or hidden away in secret and mystical depths, the masculinity of Christian discipleship must stand out in bold and flaming relief. I do not fear the serried hosts and hordes of organised devilry if only the temper of the Church is steeled for the fray. There is nothing in the might

and majesty of the foe to make us dismayed, but we do need to fear a soft and limp and flaccid Christianity. How do we stand in the matter? Can we say that the great characteristic of our modern discipleship is its boldness, and that by the very vim and pulse of our living we arrest the world in wonder? I must express my fear that we are creating vast numbers of pulpy Christians who are destitute of strong backbone. I regard with grave foreboding the encroachment of an effeminate streak in Christian character which is imperilling its robustness. Christian men and women of to-day do not sit down to the good, square, solid Biblical meals in which our fathers revelled in the generations past. We have fallen upon the days of scraps, and snaps, and chips: everything has to be reduced to the tit-bit, and we ignore the firm and solid loaf. How can we expect robustness from such diet? If the Christian Endeavour movement has a peril—and I speak not as one who looks in at its window, but as one who sits down at its table—its peril consists in the infrequency of the solid meal. When I look at the table I sometimes fear for the muscle. I confess that I would sometimes like to see larger joints upon the table, and larger supplies of wholemeal bread, with a fine hard crust to ensure mastication. Depend upon it, our diet has much to do with our persistence, the furnishing of our table determines the temper of the battlefield. One of the great cities of our island was recently concerned with the softness

of the children's limbs. Their limbs were threaded with bending gristle rather than with firm and well-knit bone. And what is the explanation? That the water they drink is too soft, destitute of the harder elements, lacking the lime which goes to the making of bone. And in the Christian life, when the bones are too soft and gristly, or when the backbone is altogether wanting, the cause may frequently be found in too soft a water-supply, in the ignoring of the harder and severer elements of Christian truth. The water of Calvinism was hard, hard enough, but it made bone, fine bone, bone that never would bend, bone that could only be broken! We must see to it that our water is not too soft, that our diet be not too snippety, that we acquire enough iron and lime to give strength and consistency to our character, and to display naturally the unflinching boldness which makes the world wonder.

"When they beheld the boldness!" That is the character with which we must confront the world. We need to display *boldness of assurance.* Mark the bold and magnificent moral sense of these inspired apostles:—"And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right!" Their conscience pealed out bold as thunder in the midnight! That is the peal which staggers the world. We must not muffle our consciences. We must not give them opiates, and sink them into a perilous sleep. Surely

that is not an irrelevant word in these days of multiplied pledges! Every pledge I take may put iron into my conscience, or it may narcotise it into deeper sleep. I pledge myself that I will pray every day, that I will read the Bible every day, or I pledge myself that I will plead for missionaries every day; or I pledge myself that I will speak to some one about the Master every day; and so on, and so on! The sphere is great, the ministry is splendid, but the peril is immediate. Every unworthy excuse for the non-fulfilment of the pledge is the application of an opiate to the conscience; it directly tends to silence the warder on the hill, and the bold, clear bugle-peal dies away from the heights. But let this, too, be said as the expression of the same invincible law: every time a worthy pledge is worthily kept, the warder on the hill becomes more vigilant, his clarion becomes more clear, and it will ring out before the world as once, in my native town, in a night of general festivity, when the bells were clanging from every steeple, I heard the firebell ring out above all other sounds, announcing that a destructive fire was burning even in the season of prevailing feast. Keep your conscience bold! Look after the bell-chamber! Let it be filled with the Holy Ghost! "When they beheld the boldness . . . they marvelled."

And we need to display *boldness of will.* Look again at these Spirit-filled men. "Let us straitly threaten them that they speak henceforth to no man

in this name." . . . "*We cannot but speak.*" How magnificent the response! They felt their wills to be caught in the sweeping current of the Infinite! They were impelled by a mighty imperative, constrained by an all-encompassing and irresistible necessity. "We cannot but speak!" Martin Luther was not far away from apostolic ways when he, too, made similar response to similar threatenings. "I can do no other, God help me!" That is the boldness we need in the warehouse, the shop, the office, the street, and the field. "I can do no other, God help me!" A temper like that, quiet, firm, bold, irresistible, would bewilder your antagonist and make him limp as water.

"My lads," said Napoleon to a regiment of horse, "you must not fear death: when soldiers brave death they drive him into the enemy's ranks." And we, too, when we are bold and unflinching, send panic and confusion into the lines of the enemy. "Be ye steadfast, unmovable." "He will not suffer thy foot to be moved." "The righteous are bold as a lion."

And so I call all, men and boys, the matron and the maid, to this temper of holy boldness. Yes, the matron and the maid! I recall the sacred name of Anne Askew, who was cruelly racked in order to extort from her a base confession. She refused to yield, although her limbs were so dislocated that when condemned to be burnt alive she could not stand, and was carried in a chair to Smithfield, where

she underwent her death with undaunted courage. Yes, and men and boys! For I recall the name of John Bunyan, condemned for twelve years to Bedford Gaol because he persisted in being true to himself. He left his wife and children, though it almost broke his heart to leave the one who was blind. "I must venture you all with God, though it goeth to the quick to leave you! I must do it! I must do it!" "When they beheld the boldness" of Anne Askew and John Bunyan, "they marvelled!"

"They took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus." That is imperfectly stated. It leaves out the essential secret. "They had been with Jesus?" Nay, *they were* with Jesus! "I fear no foe with Thee at hand to bless." "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in time of trouble. Therefore will not we fear though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be shaken in the heart of the seas." "The Lord of hosts is with us: the God of Jacob is our refuge."

XVI

MEN OF VIOLENCE

"The Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and men of violence take it by force."—MATT. xi. 12.

"*And men of violence take it by force.*" That is a most vehement and impetuous figure. We must realise the intensity and the daring of it if we would appreciate the Master's teaching. "Men of violence take it by force." It is almost suggestive of a determined burglary, the swift and terrific seizure of imprisoned treasure. It is significant of an obstinate and venturesome siege, the carrying of bristling forts by storm. "Men of violence take it by force!" The Japanese did not saunter into Port Arthur by easy and luxurious paths; they entered the stronghold at the cost of passionate and exhausting persistence, along a stiff and bloody way. "The Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and men of violence take it by force."

Is this our familiar conception of the pilgrim-band? Do we commonly regard them as a storming party, winning height after height of the promised inheritance? Is this the popular figure of Christian disciples—"men of violence" taking positions by storm? There are other figures of speech which I think fill the popular mind. "Blessed are the poor

in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven." But how far removed from the spirit of violence, and how little likely to capture a height by storm! "Poor in spirit"—"men of violence"—we fail at the reconciliation of the figures! "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." But is meekness synonymous with violence? Is meekness a spirit of rush and vehemence and holy daring? I think that when we commonly think of the pilgrim hosts, treading the way to the celestial city, it is with quite other forms and colours that our imagination works. Our "meek" man has nothing about him of the burglar. Our man of the "poor spirit" is not taking a battlement by storm. The fact of the matter is, our conception of the passive virtues needs to be vitalised, energised, and we need to remember that even the passive virtues of the Christian life have a core of tremendous purpose, and in the light and heat of that burning, passionate purpose they must be interpreted. We associate meekness with reserve, timidity, shrinking; rarely do we link it with the strong and fearless advances of a Gapon, the terrible, fiery invective of a Savonarola, or the dashing magnetic leadership of a Garibaldi. Meekness without passion is worthless. Poverty of spirit, divorced from strength and daring, will never plant a standard on the heights of the new Jerusalem. In the true man of the Kingdom, meekness comprehends the spirit of violence, and the poor in spirit are tremendous and invincible. John Bunyan

was a meek man, a man of great poverty of spirit, a man of profound and penitential humility, watering his couch with his tears; but let some law of the land, or some magistrate in whom the law was incarnate, stride across the heavenward way, and impede the pilgrim's advance, and the meekness assumed the guise of resistance, and the tearful penitent prepared to take the position by storm. Oliver Cromwell was a meek man, the child of many timidities and many fears, with his head often bowed in self-abasement, and hiding low at the place of mercy and redeeming love; but let king or Parliament lay hands upon the crown rights of the Lord, and meekness reveals its hidden fires, and the Kingdom of Heaven must be taken by storm. That is ever the characteristic of the true child of the Kingdom. The children of the Kingdom are distinguished by force of character, by available passion, by the power of unflinching persistence, by the determination to recapture the strongholds of sin, and to plant upon their heights the banner of the Lord. "The Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and men of violence take it by force." Our Lord came to make strong men.

Now, force of character is not always a pure and elevating energy. There are many forceful characters found in the way of sin who find their bourn in the gaol and on the scaffold. I always conceive Judas Iscariot to have been a man of commanding force of character, who in any society would most

naturally have moved to the front. His vigour, his determination, his singleness of purpose, his passion —all alike distinguished him from the common throng. No one could come near the man without recognising the full-charged battery of his personality. He had force enough, but it was perverse. No one will question that Lady Macbeth was a woman of most wealthy force of character. She is the most commanding figure in the entire tragedy. She moves to her purpose with enormous energy, with passionate vehemence, with intense and concentrated decision. Is this man in the way? Murder him! And that one? Do the like with him! She moves to her ends like a rolling stream of lava, and ruin and desolation fill her ways. These are types of forceful character, men and women of violence, destructive violence, endowed with personal energies like the hidden forces of the planet.

Now, when the Lord Jesus Christ, the Sovereign of the Kingdom, comes to men and women like these, and His offer of friendship and redemption is accepted, what happens? He does not destroy their force, *He transforms it.* They are not deprived of their violence, it is only sublimed. If in the midst of that great tragedy to which I have referred, the tragic note had ceased, and by some marvellous ministry Lady Macbeth had been brought under the mighty powers of redeeming grace, what would have been the character of the change? Would that strong, full-flavoured, full-blooded woman have be-

come tame and insipid, just cooing away like mild doves in the cote? Oh, no! She would have remained violent still, passionate still, resolute still, forceful still, but with all the energy transformed, the fires purged and purified, and instead of remaining a callous murderess, carving her selfish way to place and power, she would have become a Joan of Arc, leading others to privilege and freedom. No, her guns would not have been spiked or destroyed; they would have been transferred to the other side! The energy used in the Kingdom of Darkness would be now enlisted in the Kingdom of Light. Let me give you a sample of this gracious transformation. Here is violence, if you will have it! "Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord." There you have force enough, violence enough! What will you do with this man? Will you just put out his fires and make him like a damped-down furnace? Or will you let him retain his passions, only purified and glorified? That is what happened. Not one jot of force did this man lose in his transference to the Kingdom. He brought all his guns with him, only they were now directed against the strongholds of the devil, and in the love and interest of the Kingdom of God. Ay, when the Lord comes to the violent, He covets their strength, and retains it in the ministry of His word and life. "Simon, Simon! Satan hath desired to have thee"; he covets that passion of thine, that magnificent impulse of thine; but so does thy Mas-

ter; "and I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not!" The Lord will conserve our forces, and make them ministers of righteousness, for "the Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and men of violence take it by force."

But what happens when men and women have no force of character, no distinguishing violence, when their basilar capacity is weak, when they are "wishy-washy," nerveless, and impotent—what happens when men and women of this type enter into communion and covenant with the Lord? This happens: The Lord, who transforms the force of the violent, imparts force to the impotent. There is nothing more sure than this, that when the lordship and friendship of the King is honestly and sincerely accepted, the fellowship begets within the soul the energy of a powerful life. If such strength is not begotten, the strength of a storming party, it is because our communion is defective, and our surrender is incomplete. I remember that great figure used by our Lord in the fourth chapter of St. John? "The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well." It is the difference between a vessel of water and a spring, between a cistern and a river. There is little or no energy in a jug of water, but who can measure the dynamics of a spring? "The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well!" When the Lord comes into the life, energy is born, movement begins, rivers flow! "A well!" I say that the figure suggests the impartation of inexhaustible

energy, life with unfathomable resource; it portrays the transition from impotence to violence, from passionless existence to a rushing, dashing exuberance that takes the Kingdom by storm.

And have I not seen it done times without number? Have I not seen the ignobly passionless become the nobly passionate? Have I not seen the Lord make His violent men? Let me name some of the elements I have seen added to life by the ministry of redeeming grace, and we will judge whether these do not furnish the equipment of strong and triumphant men. The Lord imparts to weak men and women *decisiveness of aim.* Life detaches itself from a multiplicity of distractions and gathers strength by its own intensity. A man of one book is not to be despised. A man of one idea may overturn a commonwealth. A man of one commanding spiritual ambition shall sit with the Lord on His throne. "This one thing I do," and in the strength of that concentration all impotence is left behind. The Lord imparts to weak and passionless men and women *the energy of strong and lively feelings.* Says John Calvin: "The Gospel awakens powerful emotions." And so it does! You have only to turn to our hymn book, to its great expressions of penitence, devotion and praise, to see how the feelings of men are deepened and swayed by the marvellous constraints of redeeming love. Sometimes the feelings are tossed like a troubled sea at midnight, and again they move in radiant triumph like a glorious swell

in the light of the moon. Yes, when the Lord comes into the life, the deeps are broken up, and the passion of the soul gains liberty and enrichment. And further still, the Lord imparts to impotent men *the strength that comes from the harmonising of the powers,* the unity of the individual estate. The individual life so frequently suffers the nature of an insurrection. There is no unanimity in the soul. Our powers are discordant, fighting at loggerheads, and we are pulled a dozen different ways. Many men's souls are like an orchestral band before the conductor appears. Every instrument goes on journeys of its own proposing, and the result is Bedlam. And some men's souls are like an orchestra when the conductor has appeared; the individual liberty is ended, and all the instruments co-operate in most harmonious ministry. When the great Conductor comes into the soul, harmony reigns, and "all that is within me" blesses and praises God's holy name. And lastly, the Lord imparts to impotent souls the *saving attribute of courage.* Courage is sorely smitten when the powers of the soul are divided. When the powers of the soul are one, a man puts on courage like a robe.

Are not these elements which I have named the equipment of strong and triumphant men—decisiveness of aim, energy of feeling, the harmony of the powers, and the contagious attribute of courage? I say, on the authority of the Word of God, and by the testimony of human experience, that this is

the character the Lord creates, strong men endowed with healthy passions, brave men who move irresistibly to well-defined ends, "men of violence," who "take the Kingdom of Heaven by force."

"The men of violence take it by force!" Yes, the success of our warfare lies in our taking the offensive. There is nothing so trying to the morale and endurance of troops as to be compelled to be for ever awaiting an attack. The moral advantage is invariably with the offensive. "The men of violence take it by force." The weakness of so many is to be found just here; they are always on the defensive, and they never join the storming-party. They do not "go out," like the chivalrous knights from Arthur's table, "redressing human wrongs." They await the enemy's coming, they do not meet him on the way. In this high warfare it is the storming forces who win. "The men of violence take it by force." Let us join the offensive forces, and in the very offence discover our security. "Then the Interpreter took him, and led him up toward the door of the palace; and behold, at the door stood a great company of men, as desirous to go in, but durst not. There also sat a man at a little distance from the door, at a tableside, with a book and his ink-horn before him, to take the name of him that should enter therein; he saw also that in the doorway stood many men in armour to keep it, being resolved to do to the men that would enter what hurt and mischief they could. At last, when every man started

back for fear of the armed men, Christian saw a man of a very stout countenance come up to the man that sat there to write, saying: 'Set down my name, sir'; the which, when he had done, he saw the man draw his sword, and put a helmet upon his head, and rush toward the door upon the armed men, who laid upon him with deadly force, but the man, not at all discouraged, fell to cutting and hacking most fiercely. So that, after he had received and given many wounds to those that attempted to keep him out, he cut his way through them all, and pressed forward into the palace; at which there was a pleasant voice heard from those that were within, even of those that walked upon the top of the palace, saying—

> 'Come in! Come in!
> Eternal glory thou shalt win.'"

"The Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and the men of violence take it by force."

> "From strength to strength go on,
> Wrestle, and fight, and pray,
> Tread all the powers of darkness down
> And win the well-fought day."

XVII

PLOUGH-WORK

"And Jesus said, No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God."

LUKE ix. 62.

"His hand to the plough!" The Master did not use the figure heedlessly. It was not one of a hundred possible figures, any one of which would have served His purpose as well as the others. It was carefully chosen, to express the emphasis of the immediate need. "His hand to the plough!" The plough-work of the Kingdom! Ploughing is the heaviest work in the toil of the field. Sowing the seed is a comparatively easy ministry; by the side of ploughing it is a time of recreation. Reaping is associated with warmth and triumph, and is pervaded with the light-hearted song of the harvest-home. But ploughing is heavy, laborious work; it is concerned with the disturbance of the commonplace, the breaking up of the hard, familiar surface, the pulverising and loosing of the impermeable mass, and the exposing of the hidden depths of the light and air and dews and rains of the upper world. Ay, ploughing is a strenuous labour, primary and fundamental. And so it is in the Kingdom of God. Sowing the seed may demand no shedding of blood:

it may be as unexacting as the telling of a pleasant story, or a cheery conversation by the fire-side. But to drive your share through the conventional, to overturn the traditional, to pulverise a hard and hoary custom, to break up the popular and well-trodden expediency, to expose the subsoil of a commonplace, to disturb the superficialities and externalities of human life, and to bring to bear upon the hidden depths the light and air and moisture of heaven—all this is labour demanding bloody sweat, the heaviest work in the Kingdom of God. You may drop a seed upon the way-side, it will do no harm, but touch the common ground with your plough, and there are ten thousand guardians of the traditional, massed together in the common resistance of change. There seems to be a deep conservative streak in everybody, and instinctively we linger fondly upon the old—the old home, despite its inconveniences and its smaller rooms, the old hymn-book, the old form of service, the old way in the office—a fond clinging to the venerable, and I think the adhesion is frequently legitimate, healthy and good. But that same conservatism is frequently found buttressing an abuse, and it is often our passionate dislike of a change and disturbance which constitutes the strongest enemy of progress. There is a familiar saying in Yorkshire that the more you disturb a rubbish heap the ranker is the offence, and the proverb is always quoted in defence of the stationary, and in opposition to any policy of advancement. Now the

ploughshare is the minister of change, of disturbance, of upheaval, and the heavenly ploughman is confronted by ten thousand massed antagonisms which invest his labour with all the dignity of a chivalrous crusade. Plough-work is therefore very heavy work, pioneer work, often very lonely work, and, taken altogether, the most exacting work in the Kingdom of God. "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God."

Who were these disciples to whom these warning words were spoken? None of them were men of recognised culture, or of wealth, or of conspicuous rank. But, once settled down to their work, they proved themselves to be men of masculine handgrip, of magnificent tenacity of purpose, who, once they had begun upon a field, would see the furrow through. And to what unpromising stretches of land they had to turn their plough! Just think of two or three of the iron-bound fields to which the early apostles had got to put their hands. There was the field of Jewish traditionalism. Why, it was like trying to plough a field of brass. It had been made hard and unreceptive by the formalisms of a score of generations, and it wore the superficial sheen of a shallow and polished Pharisaism. No harder field has the ploughman of the Kingdom ever faced. And yet to this field he must direct his plough; he must turn up the subsoil of its formal and legalised life, he must pulverise its prejudices, and he must expose

its innermost and better depths to the fertilising ministry of God's redeeming grace. What a work it was! What a terrific disturbance it involved! The ploughman who attempts it shall be beaten with the flail from his own threshing-floor! "In the world ye shall have tribuation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

And there was the field of Grecian æstheticism. Think of Athens as a sphere for the Christian ploughman. You have refinement, you have accomplishments, you have a stately and luxurious ease, but you have no healthy, bounding vitality in the secret depths of the life. At this time Athens was not a living heart, but a polished stone. And to this field the ploughman of the Kingdom had to come, with his ministry of upheaval, turning up the deeper self, stirring up the deeper hunger and the deeper thirst. And the ploughman came, and he came of an inferior people, and from a distant and obscure province, and he drove his share into the benumbed life of this astonished people. Astonished? Yes, as princes and elders were astonished in Bethel, when the herdman Amos came from the hamlet Tekoa, and drove the share of prophetic warning into their soddened and luxurious life; astonished, as Sir Philip Warwick and many others were astonished, when a farmer named Oliver Cromwell came from Huntingdon, and stood amid the refinements of the English Parliament, stood there, "in a plain cloth suit, made by an ill country tailor," and spake to the

assembled representatives "with voice sharp and untunable, but with eloquence full of fervour." So came there a ploughman to hard and polished Athens, "one whose bodily presence was weak and contemptible," but who, in the strength of the Spirit of God, drove his awakening evangel into the very depths of her secret need.

And there was the field of Roman materialism. What a piece of land for the plough—hardened by power, by wealth, by pomp, by victory! And there came a ploughman! He came along the Appian way, but, as if to make his weakness still more manifest, he came not as a freeman, but in the custody of an Imperial guard. And yet he came to plough! The conjunction is tremendous—this aged ploughman with bent back, but with alert and eager spirit, coming to plough his furrow through the amazing antagonisms of Imperial Rome. And he ploughed it, and the influence of that upheaval enriches the life of England to-day.

But we need not go back to apostolic times in order to discover heavy fields and fine ploughmen. Later times have been glorified by the presentation of equally burdensome opportunities, and by the possession of equally heroic and determined men. I think of Henry Martyn, that brilliant Cambridge Wrangler, grasping the coveted honours of his beloved University, and yet strangely hungry in the hour of his academic triumph. "I was surprised to find that I had grasped a shadow!" Ah, but it

was a surprise of grace, a blessed disappointment inspired by the Holy Ghost. "The Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it," and the coveted glory fades like the withered grass. It was a gracious disillusionment, for Henry Martyn's eyes were now lifted far above scholastic prizes to the all-satisfying "prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." Having gazed upon the glory of the Lord his eyes were washed to discern the vastness of the Lord's untilled and fruitless fields, and he turned his consecrated life to India. What a field to plough! Read Amy Carmichael's saddening and yet inspiring book on "Things as they are in India." Oh, the cold, chilling, rainy desolation of it all! Oh, the cruelty, the heartbreak, the cryless, soaking sorrow, the unconsoled and hopeless pain! Things were no better in Henry Martyn's time, and it was to this dark, heavy, soddened field that this young University man turned the point of his share. He put his hands to the plough, and with that immortal word upon his lips which expressed both vow and prayer, "Now, let me burn out for God!" he began his lonely work. Henry Martyn is worth thinking about if you want a companion in the heroic life. He ploughed away at the furrow, ploughed away, and even when illness came, and the sentence of death was in him, and his friends beseeched him to come home and rest, "he could not bear the idea of completely abandoning the work," to which he had given his life, and "so he went to Persia that he might revise

his Persian New Testament among the very people for whom it was prepared." No "looking back" from the plough! No relinquishing the handles even for a holiday! Ay, and we, too, have got a living ploughman whom we cannot entice home for a holiday! We have cooeyed to him, we have hallooed to him, but Griffith John away in China moves on in the furrow! We would shower our honours on him, but he just gratefully smiles in the midst of the hopeful field. The Chairmanship of the Congregational Union was offered to him, and he quietly replied, "Send me out more ploughmen!" These are the men who preserve the race from degeneracy and putrefaction. They are "the salt of the earth."

I think of James Gilmour. I think of the wild, far-stretching field to which he addressed his uncompanioned life. Get the size of the field. Mongolia stretches from the Sea of Japan on the east to Turkestan on the west, a distance of three thousand miles, and from the southern boundary of Asiatic Russia to the great wall of China, a distance of nine hundred miles. Into that mighty field put down a single man and let him attempt single-handed the heavy work of evangelising it for Christ. Again, I say, "What a field!" and again I say, "What a ploughman!" I greatly like that first entry in his diary when he had just got his share in the uncut field: "Astir by daybreak. Made porridge and tea." (How like John Tauler, the mystic, in its combina-

tion of homely duty and sublime task!) "Made porridge and tea. Several huts in sight." (Do you feel the thrill of that? These few huts, the fringe of the field, the beginnings of the three thousand miles!) "Several huts in sight. Oh, let me live for Christ, and feel day by day the blessedness of a will given up to God." And so he ploughed away, and in unthinkable loneliness. "My eyes have filled with tears frequently these last few days in spite of myself! Oh, the intense loneliness of Christ's life! He bore it! O Jesus, let me follow in Thy steps." In after days was there much to cheer him in the furrow he had cut? "In the shape of converts I have seen no results. I have not, as far as I am aware, seen any one who even *wanted* to be a Christian." He writes again: "Oh, if things would only move!" How then? Did he turn back? Oh, no, he never looked back! He found his sufficiency in his Saviour, and he died in the furrow. In one of his last letters to his brother he wrote, "In Jesus is all fulness. Supply yourself from Him. Heaven's ahead, brother. Hurrah!" I know of no more heartening word in missionary literature than this "Hurrah!" from this much worn ploughman, cutting his day's furrow in the tremendous field of Mongolia.

Well, we are not out in Mongolia, in India, or among the islands of the South Seas: but can we do anything to help the man at the plough? Let me tell you. There was a man in our own country who

put his hands to a piece of difficult and obnoxious work. James Stansfield was a member of the Liberal Ministry, and for many years represented my native town. He resigned his place in the Cabinet that he might take up the honourable but unpopular cause of restoring honour to the degraded womanhood of our land. It was a tremendous task, exposing him to the opprobrium and contumely of his fellows, and for many years "he was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." But my purpose just now is to say that when he was delivered from Cabinet discipline, and made his first appearance, pale and nervous, in the Colston Hall at Bristol, he passed a little note along the platform to Mrs. Josephine Butler, and on the note were these words: "I am so thankful for the women's prayers." Was not that strengthening the ploughman? David Hill, the Methodist missionary in China, once wrote in his diary, "I feel very buoyant this morning"—shall we say he was whistling at the plough—"I feel very buoyant this morning: somebody must be ardently praying for me at home!" Yes, it is true. By prayer we can establish the hands of the distant ploughman; you and I can know "the fellowship of His sufferings," and, in the bonds of Holy Communion you and I and the far-off ploughman can even now meet together at the mercy-seat of God.

But there is plough-work needed nearer home. Here in our own land there is hard and intractable ground to be broken up. This hard, unpromising

ground is not the peculiar characteristic of any one particular class of people. There are the masses of the poor, hardened by the winter of their discontent, or partially petrified by a still more perilous indifference. Their life is trodden and crushed by the iron feet of poverty and by a multitude of petty cares. And the work of the Lord's ploughman is just this—to turn up the subsoil, to lift the buried self into the light, to bring their hidden potencies under the marvellous influences of God's redeeming grace. Hard work for the ploughman? Ay, heart-breaking work! And there are the classes, hardened by the bright and lengthy summer of their opulence. The ground of their life is baked hard by their contined noon. The ploughman who understakes this work must have a firm hand and a stout heart. A book was recently published entitled "Seven Years' Hard." It describes the arduous ministry of a worthy ploughman who drove his share for seven years through the field of a London slum. I wish some one would give us a book on plough-work among the suburbs, among the privileged fields of the well-to-do. I can imagine that such a story would have to be written in blood. But be that as it may, to go to rich or poor, be they hardened by luxury or by want, and seek to upheave the sub-soil in both—the deeper, better, buried self—is the work of the Lord's ploughman, and is a most Christly thing.

> "Down in the human heart, crushed by the tempter,
> Feelings lie buried, which grace can restore."

But away from the individual life of the people, in the common and corporate life, there is also plough-work to be done. What upheavals are demanded in the commonwealth! And yet it is burdensome and exhausting work. Any man who puts his hand to the plough in the field of social reform will find that he has to encounter a rigid and frigid conservatism. I do not use the word with a political significance, but to express that multiplicity of iron-bound traditions and of vested interests which permeate the soil of the common life like wire entanglements, and which fetter and embarrass the progress of the reforming plough.

What, then, shall the ploughman do in his slow, disappointing and laborious work? Shall he turn back, and leave his idle share to rust? Shall he leave the rich and the poor, with their manifold indifference, and shall he leave the great broad field of possible social redemption; shall he leave his Sunday school class, and those two or three feet of furrow which he has cut in an obscure place: and shall he hie him away home, and shelter himself in cushioned ease? "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God!" Ay, that is the peril of the heavenly ploughman, the danger of "looking back." Get your imagination upon the figure. It is the figure of a man who has got his hands upon the plough, but who has lost the forward cast from his eyes. He is trying to go forward while looking backward. He is

seeking to embody the spirit of progress while he hugs the vision of retrospect. He is going one way and looking another! Now, that cannot last. The Master says such retrospects are disabling. They unfit a man for the work of the Kingdom of God. And for this reason, that ultimately one's goings are determined by one's lookings. In the long run, we turn our feet in the direction of our gaze. The ploughman, who begins to look backward, first of all spoils his work and cuts a crooked furrow, and then he turns away from the work he has spoiled. It matters not what it is that deflects the vision—whether it is that we are dismayed by the difficulties that confront us, and we turn a lingering and covetous glance to the ease we have left behind: or whether, like Demas, we are seduced by the glittering prizes of this world, and we lose the fascination of the golden crowns of the ripened ears; or whether we are tired of being alone in the furrow, and we seek the genial company of the vast and idle crowd. I say it matters not what deflects our forward vision, the backward look begins the backward turning, and hastens our disendowment in the Kingdom of God. "We are saved by hope"; yes, and we save by hope, we cut our furrow in hope, we work for the harvest in hope, in the power of a long and forward-cast expectancy, and "no man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God," for the work of the Kingdom he can never do.

What, then, is to be the inspiration of the ploughman? He must be moved by more than impulse, for the freshness and ecstasy may pass, and leave him sad and forlorn. His constraint must be more than an ideal, for some day the ideal may mock and chill him with the impossibility of its own attainment. No, to a higher inspiration still must the ploughman turn, even to the unfailing companionship of the ever faithful Lord. There need be no lonely furrow. Drive in thy share; thy Lord is with thee; with thee in the very strength of thine arm, and in the very purpose and vision of thine heart. And if there is any man or woman, some fellow-labourer of the Lord, who is now standing doubting in the furrow, the unfinished furrow, and looking back, let me urge such to set their hands to the work again, and fix their heart upon the steadying fellowship of the Christ. And when all is over, and "curfew tolls the knell of parting day," and the tired ploughman "homeward plods his weary way," it shall once again be told in the fair abode of light how a full day's work has led to the grander labours of the eternal rest.

XVIII

THE ENERGY OF FAITH

"Verily I say unto you, if ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence, to yonder plain: and it shall remove: and nothing shall be impossible unto you."—MATT. xvii. 20.

And this great and optimistic evangel was spoken, not to men who were marching with swinging jubilant stride in the paths of victory, but to men who were temporarily disheartened under the experience of defeat. "Nothing succeeds like success"; it is easy to be an optimist, and optimistic counsel is congenial, when one has the "open sesame," when the iron gate swings back at one's approach, and the obstructive mountains sink into a plain. In such conditions it is easy to engage in the winning shout. But is there anything more pathetic and depressing than the spectacle of men baffled in a noble enterprise and retiring beaten from the field? What can be more pathetic than to have watched some chivalrous knight, riding forth in the promising dawn, with waving plume and glittering lance, returning, in the melancholy evening, torn, bespattered, and ashamed, leaving the flippant enemy triumphant on the field? And the tragedy of the home-coming is all the deeper

and darker when the way winds through ranks of contemptuous crowds, who assail the beaten knight with ribaldry and jeers. Such was the pitiable condition of this little company of the first knights of the Lord's Kingdom. They had gone forth with flying banners, gazed at by sullen and silent crowds: they crept back with drooping banners, to the laughing accompaniment of the crowd's contempt. They had met the enemy, and they had been overwhelmed in the fight. They had gone forth to battle, and they had been driven from the field. "I brought him to Thy disciples, and they could not cure him!" Let us get the scene into the imagination. Here is a man devil-possessed, writhing in the torment of his awful bondage. And here are the expulsive knights of the Kingdom. And around them is a great crowd, the majority of them hostile, many of them cynical, and all of them curious, watching this mysterious encounter with devouring interest. And the knights of the Kingdom get to work. They command, but they are not obeyed! One after another tries his power, but his power is proved to be weakness. The knights become more vehement, their imperative rises to a scream, but the devil remains enthroned! Time after time is the attempt repeated amid the muttered comments of the suspicious crowd, and time after time are they repulsed, until at last these much-claiming knights have to confess their failure, and, to the accompaniment of laughter, they retire angrily or silently from the field, leaving the devil in

possession. "I brought him to Thy disciples, and they could not cure him."

The victim was possessed of a devil. I will only pause to say I accept the explanation of his bondage. Some malign presence was making this man's life chaotic, and was driving him according to its own malicious whim. There are phenomena in human life which cannot be otherwise explained. I cannot explain mysterious emergencies—in my own mind and soul—except on the theory of subtle and active presences, who seek by illicit snare and fascination to entice me into degrading bondage. The glamour of the world does not account for them. The gravitation of the flesh is an insufficient explanation. They are only interpreted in the Scriptural suggestion that "our warfare is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places." But it is not necessary for my present purpose to win your assent to any particular theory: it is sufficient to insist that here was an evil in possession, exercising horrible control, paralysing its pitiable victim, and the knights of the Lord's Kingdom were incompetent to its expulsion. The evil was left on the field!

Now, our modern experiences very readily lead us to place ourselves in the depressed ranks of the defeated knights. Who is there who has not set out to evict an established evil, and who has not encountered bitter and ultimate defeat? It may be that

the evil possession was in your own body, or in your mind, or soul, or, maybe, it was housed in the life of your child, or in the life of your friend, or perhaps it was lodged in the corporate body in the shape of some social tyranny, some industrial disease, some national vice—whatever it be, and wherever its home, you have faced the intruder with the purpose of expulsion, and you have signally and utterly failed.

And now it is high time we hear our Master's explanation of the failure. "Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast it out? And He said unto them, Because of your unbelief!" There is no uncertainty in the diagnosis. The cause is not complicated. It is single and simple. "Unbelief!" There had been a want of confidence. There was doubt at the very heart of the disciple's effort. There was a cold fear at the very core of his enterprise. He went out with a waving banner, but the flag in his heart was drooping! "Because of your unbelief!" Our Lord is not referring to unbelief in any particular doctrine, but rather to the general attitude and outlook of the soul. There was no strong, definite confidence in the disciple, and such unbelief always ensures paralysis and defeat. Power belongs to the positive: our confidences generate our force. Energy is not born of denials, but of affirmations. Denials are only empty cartridges, possessed of no explosive strength. Negations are not potencies, even though we have sufficient to load a ship. What do we believe?

What is the range and quality of our confidence? What amount of faith is there at the heart of our crusade? The answer to these questions will give the measure of our strength, and will reveal to us our possibilities in the ministry of expulsion. Faith is energy! Always and everywhere faith is force. Take an advocate at the Bar. His duty to his client will endow him with a certain force and persuasiveness of speech, even though he has no confidence in the inherent justice of the cause he advocates. But let it be further assumed that he believes his own brief, that he has a deep, unshaken confidence in the rectitude of his cause, that he has entire and absolute assurance in his client, and what tremendous heritage of power attaches itself to his attack or defence! It is faith that tells. It is not otherwise in the Senate. Let a politician support a measure for the removal of some injustice, let him do it, not because of his conviction in its inherent right, but with his eyes fixed upon votes and popular distinction, and his support is altogether unimpressive and futile. But let a man speak with faith, with a solid core of definite confidence burning in his soul, and the glowing energy of his soul will get into his words, and his ministers will be a flaming fire. It is faith that tells. I need not elaborate the matter. On familiar planes the principle is evident. Faith is energy. "Lord, what shall we do that we may work the works of God?" This is the work of God, that ye believe! Energy for all work is there.

But there are different degrees and qualities of faith. There is faith in oneself, and such faith is by no means unaccompanied with power. No one can read the life of Napoleon Bonaparte, from his obscure early days in Corsica to the brilliant days when he strode across Europe like a Colossus, without being impressed with the amazing energy which attached to an audacious self-confidence. He fought for no principle, he had no ideals, he was allured by no constant and noble ambition. His confidence was not in a cause, but in himself, and his confidence generated a marvellous strength. But there is a faith and confidence higher than this, and endowed with a corresponding larger dynamic and resource. There is a faith in principles, in causes, in the tenacity of truth, in the indestructibility of virtue, in the invincibility of the righteous order of the world. Such faith is uninfluenced by bribes, undismayed by majorities, untroubled by threats and frowns: it tightly holds to the truth, and confidently waits its day. But still higher is the plane to which we can rise in the ascending gradient of faith. There is a faith in the living God, a faith in His love and good will, a confidence in His blessed Presence and companionship, an assurance that we are one with Him in the sacred inheritance, and that in Him we are partakers of all the mighty ministries of grace. That is the sublimest of all faiths, and it carries with it the most tremendous of all energies, for it has behind it the omnipotence of God.

"Faith as a grain," uprooting a mountain! Such is its mighty energy! I do not shrink from the startling conjunction. Our scientists are telling us that there is energy stored in one grain of radium sufficient to raise five hundred tons a mile high. And I am not daunted when our Master, speaking of a finer power than radium, a subtler energy, a spiritual force, tells us of the enormous energy, the miracle-working energy that is housed in faith of a supreme quality, even though it be only "as a grain of mustard seed." "Ye shall say to this mountain, Remove hence!" Is that to be taken literally or figuratively? Probably figuratively, for the words appear to be quoted from a familiar proverb which was used to express any vast and difficult achievement. To start a gigantic enterprise was spoken of as an attempt to uproot a mountain. But why did I say, "probably figuratively," as though there was any lingering doubt about the matter? Why not have finally disposed of the question by declaring that the energy of faith has no dominion outside spirit, and that its decrees do not run in the material world? Because that is precisely what I cannot say. We are dimly gleaming that spiritual energies may have more currency than we have ever dreamed. We are discovering more and more clearly that spiritual faith and temper have much to do with physical health, and that our doctors are comparatively impotent when the soul has a malady, or when there is present "a grief that saps the mind." I believe that many

an ailment would vanish if the unbelief went out of the soul, and if in its place there came a sweet, sound, strong confidence in the Lord. "Ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence! . . . and it shall remove!" And I am equally convinced that the exercise of a vigorous faith in God has more dominion than we have yet realised in securing the entire expulsion of impure bodily habits and lusts. Here is a man or woman possessed by the unclean devil of drunkenness. How can the devil be expelled? Well, we commonly say that it is a disease, and it must be treated as a disease. Yes, but how shall we treat it? A physical mountain can only be removed by physical means. Are you absolutely sure of that? The doctor shall prescribe medicine. Very well. The food shall be prudently selected, and all stimulating diet shall be tabooed. Very good. His environment shall be changed. Ah, are you sure that you are now altogether on the material plane? Are you not coming to another domain? Are you not bringing mystic forces into the ministry? He must have a new hobby! What now is your drift? His society must be refined, and his reading must be of a more restful and sedative type. Has not the treatment of the physical mountain now left the purely physical means? I do not disparage these minor ministries, for I regard them all as the beneficent gifts of God. But, above and beyond all these, sometimes entirely apart and independent of them, I would exalt the marvellous power of the

grace of God, acting through the means of alert and confident faith. I say that in these regions, even the regions of fleshly habit and passion, faith has removed mountains. I have known the craving for drink annihilated in an hour by the tremendous spiritual resources commanded by faith, and even if the instance stood alone, which is by no means the case, it affords a glimpse of a world of spiritual dynamics which we have not yet used or even realised.

And so it is in the entire mountain-range of human difficulty and enterprise. Faith is energy, energy by which the mountain is to be removed. Enterprises born in doubt are smothered at birth. Can we sweeten and purify our streets? Everything depends upon our faith. Can we expel the devils of drunkenness and lust? Can we cheer and enlighten and redeem the slums? Can the desert be made "to rejoice and blossom as the rose"? Can we ourselves be the ministers of a great salvation? "According to your faith be it unto you." "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder plain: and it shall remove: and nothing shall be impossible unto you." "Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low." What, then, cannot we do, if we march together, in the power and constraint of a confident faith? We can still work miracles, in the name of the Lord of Hosts.

XIX

THE TESTIMONY OF THE CONSCIENCE

"For our glorying is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in holiness and sincerity of God, not in fleshly wisdom, but in the grace of God, we behaved ourselves in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward."—2 Cor. i. 12.

That is the reply of an apostle to charges directed against the character of his life and ministry. The thunder has passed, and this forms the last rumbling of a storm of great severity. Alienation had arisen between the apostle and the believers at Corinth. Lax practices had been tolerated in the Corinthian church, and the apostle had denounced them with fiery and scathing indignation. And how had they answered his indictment? By questioning his authority, by throwing suspicion upon his credentials, by pronouncing him an interloper who did not bear the original apostolic seals, and by insinuating charges against his moral integrity. It is with this last charge that my text is concerned. They said he was light in promise and careless in execution. His word was not his bond. His path was strewn with once fair promises which were now blown about like withered leaves. They charged him with "lightness," with levity, as being a man of ready words

and unready performance. And how does he answer it? In the only way in which any man can find a satisfactory answer. By appealing to his own conscience, and ascertaining if the secret witness confirms or destroys the indictment of his foes. And that is the only point of interest for to-day. The details of the controversy are dead. It would serve little purpose to attempt to revive them. But it is of perennial interest, and of vital importance to know how a great apostle surveyed his own behaviour, by what standards he judged it, and in what conclusions he found his moral satisfaction and peace. How did Paul examine his life? What was the nature of the tribunal? In what did he find his peace? His court of judgment was the conscience. The case to be submitted was his public and private behaviour. The verdict was one of moral approbation. The issue was an enhanced and glorified rejoicing. "For our glorying is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in holiness and sincerity of God, not in fleshly wisdom, but in the grace of God, we behaved ourselves in the world, and more especially to you-wards."

What was the court of judgment? "Our conscience." That is the supreme court to which every man must make final appeal. But how is the court constituted? What is the conscience? Many symbols have been used in attempted definition. It has been described as a moral sense, and every physical sense has been enlisted in the work of interpretation.

Conscience has been said to be a sense of sight for discerning and discriminating moral colours—the virgin white of rectitude, the deadly black of iniquity, and the dubious greys of ambiguity and compromise. And conscience has been said to be a sense of hearing, for the detection of moral tones, moral harmonies and discords, and for distinguishing "the voice of the great Eternal" from the shrill loudness of the fleeting day. And conscience has been said to be a sense of taste, a palate for the appreciation of moral flavours, by means of which we may be able to apprehend the difference between the morally bitter and offensive, and the morally nutritious and sweet. Conscience has also been compared to the æsthetic sense. The æsthetic sense is an inherent capacity for detecting the ugly and the beautiful, making appreciative response to the graceful curve, and recoiling from makeshift and confusion. And the conscience is said to be an æsthetic sense on the moral plane, by which we feel the grace and fascination of moral loveliness, and the repulsion of moral chaos and perversity.

Well, all these analogies are significant, and they help us to give expression to the nature and ministry of the conscience. But I think we must track the matter into yet deeper places, even though we may feel the dark and awful silences of "unfathomable mines." If conscience be only a sense, we can conceive it without awe. If conscience be only a superior sense it is void of the awful authority of the

judgment bench. If conscience be only an æsthetic perception it is shorn of the thunders and lightnings of the throne. No man reasons rightly about conscience who makes it to be pale moonlight, devoid of scorching beam. No conception is adequate which makes conscience a harmless sheet-lightning playing picturesquely about the ripening corn. Everybody knows that conscience is not only luminous but convicting, it not only lights but it strikes, its burning arrows are fraught with peril and death. We have got to trace that forked flame and therefore we must go deeper still.

Let me give John Wesley's definition or description of the conscience. John Wesley says that the conscience is "a faculty or power implanted by God" in the soul by which every man perceives "what is right or wrong in his own heart or life, in his tempers, thoughts, words or actions." Does that take me any deeper? Apparently not, but in reality it leads me into the infinite. It names God in association with conscience, and in that conjunction I get the requisite awe of its judgment, and I begin to feel the mysterious origin of the lightning flash and flame. But may our analysis be even more precise than John Wesley's? Let us examine the word itself. Our English word "conscience" is a very accurate transcript of the original word used by the apostle Paul. If we examine the one we shall be exploring the other. Take then the word "conscience." Break it in two. Put aside the prelim-

inary syllable. What have you left? *"Science."* And what is "science"? Knowledge. Attach your preliminary syllable, "con." What have you now? "Con" is significant of association, fellowship, intercourse. "Con" marks the confluence of many or the meeting of two. Where "con" is, there is isolation. "Con-science"; "knowledge with": here are two engaged! It is the fellowship of intelligences, it is the communion of man and God. It is the relation of pupil and teacher, of receiver and giver, of echo and voice. The preliminary syllable in "conscience" is significant of a mysterious second Presence whom we name God.

And now I am prepared to venture upon a sentence which I offer not as an exact definition but as a practical description of the conscience. Conscience is a medium in personality through which is transmitted to the soul the moral judgment and imperatives of God. In the word "conscience" the value of the last syllable is conditioned by the value of the first. The "science" will be dim, dull, unreliable if the "con," the association, be frail or broken. In every healthy conscience there is correspondence between the human and the divine, and the quality of the correspondence is determined by the medium through which it is made.

The medium can be impaired. We can interfere with the "con," and the "science" will be perverted. John Bunyan, that marvellous expert in the heart of man, declares that the conscience can become "stony,

benumbed," it can be "bribed, deluded, muzzled." If all that can happen to the former part of the word, it is not difficult to imagine what will happen to the latter part. The apostle says that the medium can be "seared as with a hot iron," its perceptive surface can be destroyed as we might destroy the prepared surface of a photographer's plate. He declares that the conscience can abound in what he calls "offence," like the flaws in a mirror which render its transmission untrue. And above all this, our Master Himself declares that the medium can be so distorted that the supposed knowledge is no knowledge at all. "If thine eye be evil," if the "con" be ravaged, "thy whole body shall be full of darkness." "And if the light that is in thee be darkness," if thou art mistaking a miasmic will-o'-the-wisp for a heavenly star, "how great is the darkness!"

Common experience gives confirmation to this teaching. There are consciences which are lacking in accuracy, and there are consciences which are lacking in range. There are consciences which are irregular anywhere, and there are others which are only accurate in limited spheres. There are consciences which are domestically vigilant but politically dormant. Some consciences are responsive to private debt, but dumb and numb to public obligation. There is a sense of right which reigns in the inch but not in the mile. Its decree governs the home, but it does not engirdle the world. Its do-

minion does not include the Congo and America, and it registers no imperatives concerning lands afar.

And so, if we are going to submit a matter to the conscience it is of the utmost necessity that we first of all examine the tribunal itself. Is the court capable, unbribable, pure and true? If we are going to consult the "science" we must rigorously scrutinise the "con." When we go into conscience it must be into the most holy place, with only the thinnest veil between ourselves and God. When we hear the voice of conscience we ought to be able to say, with apostle and prophet, "The Lord said unto me," and our light must be a beam from the great white throne.

It was before such an august tribunal that the apostle submitted his public and private life. *"Our behaviour in the world, and more abundantly to youward."* Let us note the breadth of the case submitted to the court. He appeared before the solemn sanctities of his conscience, and he submitted his behaviour as a Christian "in the world." Think of it. The world is the realm of studied ambiguity and compromise. The speech of the world is the language of equivocation. Worldliness is human activity with God left out. And for a Christian to be "in the world" is to be always exposed to the snare of dissembling, to the temptation of borrowing an accent or a dialect, and of practising the doleful arts of the trimmer. The Christian must have connection with the world, but no communion. He must

be "in" it but not "of" it. He must move among its ambitions and not lose his aspirations. He must confront its experiences and not lose his principles. He must encounter its cleverness and not lose his wisdom. He must be able to look upon its coveted garlands and not throw away his crown. Can it be done? The apostle Paul, at any rate, took his behaviour in the world, and quietly and confidently submitted it to the searching judgment of a conscience which registered the holy mind of God.

But there is another part of the case. *"My behaviour more abundantly to you-ward."* He submits this to the tribunal, and I really think that this is even more daring than the other. He submitted his life in the church as well as his behaviour in the world. And that includes a very bold and inclusive scrutiny. For let me mention a very extraordinary thing which sometimes characterises the Christian life. There are Christian men whose consciences are more active in the world than they are in the Church. They pay more respect to the obligations of their membership in the club than to the obligations of their membership in the Church. They regard the one with scrupulous exactitude, they regard the other with comparative lightness and laxity. If thought and sympathy and prayer are the appointed contributions to Christian fellowship, then they pay or they don't pay, just as they please. They never infringe a rule of the club; they ignore the rules of the Church without compunction. A masonic pledge

has more sanctity than their covenant with the Church of Christ. Their communion with a minor society is a reality, their communion with Christian believers is only a name. Now that is a very extraordinary thing, and I think that in some degree it is a common experience. If our Church relationships and obligations were to be brought before the searching glance of some supreme tribunal I think the majority of us would shrink into a dwarfed and pathetic insignificance. But it is just here that the apostle places his most exultant emphasis. "Our behaviour" more especially "to you-ward." He takes his life of fellowship in the Church, and he spreads it out before the tribunal of a conscience that is illumined with the glorious presence of God.

And what is the verdict of the court? The verdict is in two parts, negative and positive. And the negative verdict is this: "*Not in fleshly wisdom.*" Such was the negative testimony of conscience concerning the life submitted to its judgment. "Not in fleshly wisdom!" said the court. This is not a life of "show," of glittering cleverness and superficial sharpness. Whatever else it is, Paul's "behaviour" is not a fine polish upon a vicious grain. It is not the courtesy of fine breeding detached from noble morals. It is not the shimmer on noisome waters: its wisdom is not a ghostly light playing about a grave. So said conscience, and therefore, said Paul, "Our glorying is this, the testimony of our conscience . . . not in fleshly wisdom."

And what was the positive verdict? *"In holiness."* That was the first positive item in the verdict. "In holiness!" And what is that? Well, in the first place, holiness is something in the grain, it is in the stuff, in the fibre, in every thread and every fibre of the soul. It is all in the piece, and all of a piece. It is "wholeness." And then, in the second place, holiness means the divine in the grain, the divine in the nature, in the life-stuff, God in the entire piece. Think of that, and prayerfully wonder! Here is a man, of such glorious consecration, that when he takes the fabric of his behaviour and spreads it before his conscience, and conscience has examined it in warp and woof, this is the verdict given—God in every thread, wrought "in holiness," royal through and through!

And take the remaining clause in the verdict of the court—*"in sincerity of God."* That was its second positive characteristic. And what is this word "sincerity"? Its literal significance is "sun-judged." The character of the apostle was not dulled in the radiant beam. Its brightness matches the light of God. And therefore there is nothing shady about it, and nothing underhand, nothing sneaking about in the shadows. There is no subtle manœuvring, no Jesuitry, no duplicity. Everything is as frank as the day, and as candid as the noon. "In sincerity of God!"

Such was the judgment of this august tribunal on this man's behaviour in the world and in the Church.

"Our glorying is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in holiness and sincerity of God, not in fleshly wisdom but in the grace of God, we behaved ourselves in the world, and more abundantly to youward." Do you wonder at the sober glory, do you wonder at the sacred joy? When a vigilant conscience speaks in this wise, the awful tribunal is transformed into our Father's house, and there is music and dancing. Any other kind of joy is vain and fleeting. Joy that is not born near conscience is only the flare of a street-lamp, subject to accident, and liable to be blown out on the first tempestuous day. Joy that is born near conscience shares the flame of the seraphim who burn and shine with the eternal life of God.

XX

THE ART OF GIVING

"Let each man do according as he hath purposed in his heart, not grudgingly, or of necessity; for God loveth a cheerful giver."—2 Cor. ix. 7.

That is a description of Christian beneficence of fine and superlative order. And yet the statement is all maimed and bleeding; it is torn away from so many vital kinships, in which its life consists. That is the ever-besetting peril of textual exposition, the peril of regarding an amputated limb as the entire body. And this is particularly true of all moral counsels, of all those ethical injunctions which seem to be detached from spiritual sanctions: we handle them in their apparent separateness, and we do not see that they are damaged and bleeding members. It is the simple truth to say that in the word of God you cannot remove anything without hurting it; anything and everything can only be safely regarded when seen in its profound and manifold nerve-kinships with the central life of the entire book.

Let me change my figure. Here is this fair grace of Christian beneficence growing before us in this verse. You cannot lift it out of its setting and hopefully plant it elsewhere. It would not be the same if you cut it out and inserted it in the columns of

our daily press. There are some plants of which you can safely say, "You can grow them anywhere!" There are others which require a peculiar and specially compounded soil, and only in this combination can they thrive. And this wild flower of the kingdom at which I am asking you to gaze is particularly one of the kind which demand a rich and special soil, and it has got such a soil in the ground-bed of this great epistle. It is not a bit of good merely admiring the size and shape and colour of this exquisite plant, and utterly ignoring the wealthy setting in which it finds its nutriment. You might as well dig up some flower of the woods, growing there in a bed as rich as a bride's cake, and plant it in the dry innutritious gravel of a backyard, and expect a continuance of the woodland glory, as take graces like these from their beds of fat sustenance and expect them to flourish in chance and impoverished surroundings. No, we cannot grow fine graces in lean soils. There is only one thing more depressing than to see an ill-fed plant lifting its sickly head out of a pauperised soil, and that is the spectacle of a pinched and anæmic virtue raising its slender and uncertain life out of poverty-stricken resource. The roots of all these apostolic graces run right throughout the epistles, and every moral maxim is imbedded in profound devotion. It is not my present purpose to analyse the soil of this particular epistle; it is sufficient to emphasise the richness of its quality. Investigate for yourselves the rich sec-

tion exposed in the fifth chapter, or that splendid layer at the end of the sixth chapter; or give patient examination to this rare representative portion of the eighth chapter, "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might become rich": or take the wealthy culmination of this very chapter, "Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift": and I think you will feel that these practical precepts emerge out of the Infinite, and suck their nutriment from the very heart of God.

The fact of the matter is, the liberality of the apostle Paul is always a fruit, and never a work, and it is the product of his communion with the Eternal. First of all, he had passed through a mighty spiritual experience which he can only describe as a transition from darkness to light, from slavery to freedom, from utter poverty to "unsearchable riches in Christ." That glorious emancipation had made him the love-slave of His Deliverer, and he watched with vigilant love-eyes for the faintest indication of his Master's will. "The love of Christ constraineth me!" And out of this liberty of the love-slave there emerges a spontaneous and fervent gratitude which expresses itself in every form of liberal and bountiful service. Paul was a great giver because he had so greatly received. He gave thanks "without ceasing," and his substance followed hard in the track of his praise. Paul's liber-

ality can be traced to Calvary; all his giving had its roots at the Cross.

Having spent so much time in emphasising the far-stretching relationship of this great virtue, I am now ready to consider its prominent characteristics. What is the nature of a fine beneficence? The apostle begins his description by proclaiming the negative aspects of the grace. First of all, there is an absence of "*grudging.*" That is a very expressive word, and its real content is given in the margin, where we find the alternative phrase "of sorrow." That is to say, there are some people whose giving is "of sorrow," as though they were in pain, and the transaction is done to the accompaniment of sighs and groans. Who does not know that profound sigh which encounters the appeal, as if the very pillars of the soul were yielding? There is no wedding air about the ministry: it is possessed by the tearful sombreness of the grave! It is not that the gift is withheld: it is that it comes so reluctantly, as though some heart-strings were snapping in the passage. The thing is done, but it is more than half-spoilt in the doing! And what is the explanation of this pain of apparent martyrdom? Just this: the soul is wedded to a thing instead of to an ideal, and the extraction of the thing is an agonising divorce. Now the apostle declares that Christian beneficence has this plain characteristic, it is not grudging, it is not "of sorrow." There is no sigh of collapse, there is no frictional sound in the trans-

ference, there is no sulky warder at the gate who opens the treasure house with grim reluctance. The door is open, there is sunshine on the step, and there is a sound of welcome within. "Not grudgingly!"

And then he mentions a second negative characteristic; true liberality is not "*of necessity.*" By which phrase the apostle most clearly implies that there are people who give just because they are compelled to give. They give because they must, and not because they desire. They would not give if they could find a way out of it. Their liberality is a "forced" product, and, like all forced things, lacking nature's matured sweetness and charm. They give to the poor through the poor rate, but most certainly they would not if they could help it! If the poor-rate collector had no more compulsory force behind him than a tract distributor, the springs of their liberality would dry up in a day! They give "of necessity." But there are other necessitating ministries besides the police. Social conventions can exercise a compulsion which elicits apparent liberality. Some people give because others are giving, and it will not pay to be out! This is not a liberality that pioneers and makes discoveries for itself: it is always found in the tracks which others have made. It is never in the van: it is always in the rear. It never initiates, it only follows. It is like the slip of paper lying in the railway track, snatched up in the suction of a passing train and whirled along in the path of common destiny. This liberality is

caught in fashionable currents, and transiently moves of "necessity." Now the apostle teaches that no such small "necessity" characterises the Christian grace. It does not give because it must, it gives because it wants. There is no outer compulsion upon it, tyrannically ruling its reluctant heart. Its constraint is quite otherwise, the gentle constraint of devotional love. "Not of necessity!"

But the apostle leaves these merely negative and somewhat colourless attributes and proceeds to more positive characteristics. True liberality is simple, having been born in the "heart." It is not engendered in the regions of calculation and expediency, but in that deep, elementary, vibratory region, the abode of the sympathetic chords of the life. There can be no fine liberality if these are untouched and unstirred. All men are equipped with the fundamental, resonant chords of humanity, and it is only when these are struck and give out a vibratory response that we obtain the conditions of Christian beneficence. But let no one imagine that the apostle is proclaiming the intended domination of blind emotions. This basal sympathy is to express itself in intelligent purpose. "*According as he hath purposed in his heart.*" True liberality is inclusive of both; heart and purpose; emotion and understanding; it is not symbolised in the dark, moving waters of a restless sea, but in these same disturbed waters in the light of the full moon. Christian graces are not blind dispositions; they are lit up by the ministry

of a vigilant understanding. And further, this virtue of liberality is not only simple, and intelligent, it is warmed through and through with a most genial heat—"God loveth a cheerful giver!" I do not think the phrase needs any elaboration, certainly not for clearness, and possibly only for emphasis. But can there be any more gracious and welcome experience than this one of having to do the King's business with a man whose heart is stirred, and whose purpose is clear, and who just baptises you with sunshine that he has caught from the countenance of his Lord? If you have discovered a more delightful experience than that, I should like to know in what fields you have been pasturing! And yet, after all, there is a more delightful experience than so gracious a meeting with this so gracious a man, and that is, to be the man yourself, with your own heart stirred like harp chords, and your own purpose clear with the counsels of the Almighty, and your own sunlit face throwing reflected beams of cheery good will upon every form of noble enterprise. Surely that is better and more delightful still; and away in the heights of these superlative compassions, "be mine this better part!" "Let each man do according as he hath purposed in his heart: not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver."

Now, if this high quality of liberality is to be manifested in our life, there are one or two matters to which we must give attention, altogether apart from those primary and radical conditions to which

I referred at the outset. The spirit of liberality requires to be kept informed. To deny the information is to refuse the requisite incitement. Liberality cannot work in a vacuum any more than sound can travel in a vacuum. Liberality works through certain prepared conditions, and one of the requisite conditions is that we should provide it with news. That is true in reference to all manner of noble enterprise, both at home and abroad. There will be no liberality where nothing is known: and therefore next to our knowledge of God we require the facts of human life. Liberality and ignorance will never consort together. But even facts themselves may lie in the mind as infertile as marbles in a boy's pocket. If facts are to become operative and incentive, our imaginations must be brought to play upon them. The majority of us only see facts superficially, we do not see them cubically: we see the surface, we do not see the depth. Now the imagination is the God-given implement for discovering the cubical contents of a fact, and it is only when we sit down and patiently use that implement that this hidden significance is disclosed. It is a profound conviction of my life that the majority of people do not use their imaginations; they use what they call their imaginations, but in reality they are only employing a certain power of fancy which lightly pictures things that are not, and not this tremendous instrument for seeing things as they are. I declare that if we could see things as they are in the more desolate

portion of such a city as Birmingham—I do not mean merely to go and see a grey and dingy court, or even to enter into a house which abides in constant twilight, for even things seen may be facts unknown, we may see and not perceive—but if we could imaginatively enter into its inner significances, significances that cannot be told in speech, and if we could track some of its far-reaching relationships, and open out these stubborn facts like the opening of a chestnut burr, everybody's liberality would leap to the enterprise of institutional work. And what applies to this applies to the entire field of Christian service. We must get to know the insides of our facts, and we must use every available means to obtain the knowledge. One fact, imaginatively realised, is worth a ton of insignificant facts, tumbled upon the floor of the most retentive memory. There would be no grudging, and no giving "of necessity," but an abundance of cheerful giving, if those who are "in Christ" would endeavour to realise the cubical content of our common life.

But, after all that I have said, I do not think I have completed the enumeration of the conditions that are requisite for a free and cheery spirit of liberality. Even with all this, the heart would still be exposed to the most insidious snares. There are people who are most unquestionably in Christ, and who even exercise such imagination as I have tried to describe, and yet, through lack of ordinary business arrangement, their giving is marked by niggard-

liness and stint. I am the keeper of no man's conscience, and it is not mine to dictate to any man's conscience, but I am dealing with a most clamant defect in modern Christian life in this very want of reasonable system in our beneficence. I am perfectly sure that no liberality will continue generous and ready and cheery unless there is some basal and systematic arrangement. In the old Jewish dispensation the brotherhood of God's people were commanded to set aside one-tenth of their income for unselfish service. I am persuaded that in the case of men of affluence, and even of moderately wealthy incomes, this is by no means an adequate proportion. I do not think a man with a thousand a year ought to be contented with the consecration of a tenth. Recently I heard very directly of one conspicuously wealthy man in our country, who began in very humble circumstances, and who in his comparative poverty systematically assigned a tenth for service, but he increased the proportion with the increase of his wealth, and he now assigns one-third to the service of his fellows and his Lord. But my purpose just now is to urge the necessity and the delight of some reasonable system in our beneficence. Set aside a certain proportion: determine that proportion in the very presence of your Lord. And what will be the effect? In the first place, it will save you from the peril of assuming you have given more money than you really have. There are some people who unfortunately estimate their liberality by the

number of appeals that are made to them, and not by their responses. "Another appeal!" they say! "And yet another!" "Another still!" And they forget that this was their only response, and they have come to count the very appeal as righteousness! Now, systematic giving will save us from that. And it will save us further from countless worries and petty casuistries. We shall not have to be continually arguing with ourselves, and pleading with ourselves, and excusing ourselves. No, there will be the simple enquiry: There are our resources, and here is the appeal: can it be met? And last of all, systematic giving makes liberality a delight. To go to your consecrated money, to your dedicated tenth, or whatever the proportion may be, is like having a private bank in which you can draw for the work of the Lord. Try it, and you will add your seal to the witness that this is true!

"*God loveth*" such a giver! What an inheritance! What a baptism! Such a man lives in the love of the Almighty. It is enough. In this divine good life will reach its consummation and its crown. The man is even now "for ever with the Lord."

XXI

WANTED, A VERDICT!

"And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, *choose you this day whom ye will serve:* whether the gods which your fathers served that were on this side of the flood or the gods of the Ammonites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."—Jos. xxiv. 15.

I am not just now concerned with the details of the particular incidents in which this challenge was born. The words are independent of local environment; they have a permanent value. In this respect they are like many of the Psalms; they belong to no clime or time, and they exercise an unchanging ministry through all the changing years. But the historical setting is briefly this: An old crusader has come to the end of his days, and in the assembly of his people he gives them his last counsel, the matured warning and experience of his years. He reviews their wonderful history, the long succession of providential mercies, shining like an unbroken line of light far back to the days of their Egyptian bondage. He rehearses the Lord's dealings with His people, and he also rehearses the people's dealings with the Lord. He recalls their murmurings, their reluctant service, their dubious homage, their uncertain attachment, their frequent revolts. He declares that they

have spent their days in light and flippant flirtations, and that they have never settled down into steady affection, and into serious wedlock with the Lord. And so this is the urgent counsel of the dying warrior to his people: "Let these flirtations be ended! In one way or another make up your minds! Don't go any further with this dubious limping gait! Settle down to something positive and decisive! Choose you this day whom ye will serve." It is the critical position to which the prophet Elijah also brought the people. "How long halt ye between two opinions?" How long will ye spend your life in inconclusive flirtations? Settle the matter. Make up your minds. "If the Lord be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word," and the timid flirtations went on. And so it is to-day. In spiritual relationships men flirt, but they do not wed; they pay courteous attention, but they do not choose. They give a respectful hearing, but they do not risk an issue. Everything is open, nothing concludes. And so I am bringing this old-world counsel into our modern conditions, as counsel which I think is pertinent to much of our inconsequent and inconclusive life. Put an end to mental hesitancy and moral timidity! Stop the flirtations and wed! "Choose you this day whom ye will serve."

Now let us look a little more in detail at the counsel, and see what it implies. First of all, it surely means that *our thinking should lead to moral*

conclusions. There is such a lot of thinking on moral and spiritual themes which is never tied together in a final knot. It is loose, unfinished, and ineffective. There are so many of our mental webs which never become garments. The looms of the brain are in almost perpetual motion; we spin, and spin, and spin, but nothing comes of it. And therefore it is that John Ruskin has said that "one of the worst diseases to which the human mind is liable is its disease of thinking." Now it is quite unnecessary to say that Ruskin is no advocate of mental passivity or mental indolence. He spent his days in the endeavour to awake our people to mental vigilance, and to quicken their perceptions in body, mind, and soul. It is not, therefore, a remonstrance against mental activity, but against a mental activity which makes no practical advance. It is a remonstrance against the motion of the hobby-horse, motion without progress, and not against the motion of a mental steed whose movements are directed by bit and bridal to definite and serviceable ends. Diseased thinking is goal-less thinking, thinking which never arrives, thinking which never concludes; and, according to Ruskin, it is one of "the worst diseases" which affect the human mind.

Now, all thinking about these high, imperial matters should culminate in moral crises, and toward those crises they should inevitably tend. At certain intervals in our life our minds should be constituted a court of law, as in the closing hours of some mo-

mentous and entrancing case. The witnesses have been heard. The evidence is finished. Counsel has spoken. The judge has sifted the entanglements, and presented the issue in a clear and continuous story. And now for the verdict, and for the judgment, and for execution, and the case is ended. And that, I say, is what we want in the realm of the mind. Now and again the bustling quests of the mind must be hushed and concentrated on a solemn court of judgment. The evidence must be regarded as closed. Mental exploration must change to moral verdict, and the judgment must be executed. Yes, that is what we want, and that is what we lack in much of our mental movements—we lack moral verdicts. Our thinking trails on, and on, and on, for the mere delight of the intellectual process, and the verdict is indefinitely delayed. And so life is spent in a sort of royal commission which never reports, and in the flippant delay the moral slumber of the soul is deepened and intensified.

Now there are some matters on which we are no longer entitled to keep an open mind. We ought to wipe out the note of interrogation and insert a period. The verdict ought to be given, and the case closed. The beauty of holiness, the obligation of truthfulness, the duty of charity, the dignity of chivalry, the mighty ministry of sacrifice—these are typical of matters which ought no longer to lie upon the table as open questions, but upon which we ought to issue final judgment, and close the doors of our minds.

But above and beyond all these questions of virtue there is the supreme issue of the moral and spiritual supremacy of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. We may keep an open mind on the nature of the miracles, on the true interpretation of the atonement, on the function and limitations of the ministry of prayer, and on a thousand and one theological questions which for centuries have provided diversions for the schools; but on the question of the moral sovereignty and spiritual pre-eminence of the Christ; on the question as to who has the right to the homage and service of our wills, the case ought to be closed, and our minds ought to register a definite and final decision.

I venture to say there is not a man or woman who reads these words who requires further evidence about the rightful leadership of Jesus Christ; and yet the case drifts on and on, and no weighty and revolutionising verdict is pronounced. And we cannot afford to surrender our lives to purposes of mere enquiry. We are in this world, not merely as enquirers, but as crusaders; not only to think, but to do. Take my own life. At the most, there is probably only a stretch of thirty years awaiting me. What shall I do with the years? Shall I go on and on, making timid and doubtful enquiries? Shall I go on, lightly toying with evidence that I have been touching for years; or shall I pull myself together, and risk a strong conclusion? In my life, at any rate, it were high time the court were constituted for

judgment, high time that I pronounce verdict upon the Lord, solemnly, definitely, and decisively; and on this most supreme of all supremacies finally close the case.

But would not that be narrowness of mind? But why should it be regarded as narrowness of mind to have a closed mind about settled issues? There is a mental disposition rampant to-day which describes itself as "breadth of mind," and which is a very spurious thing. We seem to be approaching a time when the only people who will be entitled to be called broad will be people who have settled convictions about nothing! The only people who will be regarded as mentally free will be mental vagrants, who have no fixed and settled abodes! I say the breadth is spurious, and the freedom is counterfeit. Believe me, there is a very real and profound distinction between mental licentiousness and mental liberty. Mental licentiousness is laxative; mental liberty is tonic. All true liberty has a certain fixity, and from that fixity it draws its sap and virtue. Men who have no mental holdfasts may boast about their freedom, but their freedom is unreal and is neither fruitful nor efficient. It is the truth which makes us free. It is the man with a settled home who can walk abroad with serene and receptive freedom. And therefore I come back to the old counsel. Think up to an issue. Think up to a conclusion. Think up to moral settledness and fixity. "What think ye of Christ?" Register a verdict,

choose your leader, "Choose you this day whom ye will serve."

Let me take you a step further. We are counselled not only to think to an issue, but to register our mental verdicts in definite moral and spiritual decisions. If in your mind the Lord Jesus Christ is judged to be the supreme Leader and Saviour of men, then pronounce the judgment from the throne of your life, and solemnly resolve to give the Christ the practical homage and fealty of your will. For it is not only "thinking" that is prone to meander in tedious and wasteful futility, but "willing" also is apt to loiter in wasteful indecision. A man may determine upon a verdict, and may solemnly pronounce the verdict, and yet he may postpone the execution of it. A man may honestly say "Lord! Lord!" and do not the thing which the Lord says. And that is why the Bible calls upon men to put their solemn verdicts into immediate execution. "Choose you *this day* whom ye will serve." "To-day, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts!" "Behold, now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation!" And yet we postpone, we dilly-dally, we devise excuses, and, as in the procrastination of Hamlet, "the native hue of resolution is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought." The court has given judgment, but execution is stayed. That is surely the condition of multitudes in this land. They have closed the case. They have given their verdict. And yet their life is still frittered

away in puerilities, or in uncertain or undignified enterprise. And all for want of deliberate choice, and swift and summary action! They let "I dare not" wait upon "I would," and life speeds on to the night! The more I live, the more I study life, the more I see its aimless, goal-less driftings, the more I counsel a definite deliberateness in the determination of a Christian life. Yes, I would even go so far as to say that I would have men break up their indecision by a deliberate action which is striking and dramatic. I do not mean a stagey spectacle, with an applauding audience looking on, but a dramatic moment in secret, when a man smashes up his moral hesitancies and indecision, and, laying a firm hand upon the neglected helm of his boat, shall say, "*Now!* henceforth for me to live is Christ!" "Choose you this day whom ye will serve . . . As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

But let me give a note of warning. Let every man be careful to distinguish between resolutions and resolution. We may make our resolutions, but want of resolution will make them ineffective. There is an old saying that the way to hell is paved with good resolutions. I suppose it is true, but they are good resolutions in which there has been no resolution. We may make our resolutions, but we need a mystic force of resolution if they are to be efficient. And men are so prone to confound the one with the other, and their moral enterprises collapse in pathetic disaster. For let us ever remember, that

even when the verdict has been given, and our resolutions have been made, the bias of our beings may be against our moral choice. Yes, that is the controversy which characterises thousands of lives when they first pull themselves together for moral decision. The combatants are resolutions versus inclinations, and in such warfare mere resolutions are apt to prove very frail. And so again I say, when we have made our resolutions we need spiritual resolution to make them powerful. "It is not by might, not by power, *but by my spirit,* saith the Lord." You may put your firm hand upon the rudder of your sailing boat; but you are not going far without the wind. "Breathe on me, breath of God!" "Ye shall receive power when the Holy Ghost is come upon you." "And He breathed upon them," and the flapping sails tightened to receive it, and the boat moved out of harbour in its God-appointed way! "And He breathed upon them," and the frail resolution pulsed and tingled with resolution, and the timid recruit became a valorous knight, fit to take his place on the sternest part of the field!

"Breathe on me, Breath of God:
Fill me with life anew,
That I may love what Thou dost love,
And do what Thou would'st do.

Breathe on me, Breath of God,
Till I am wholly Thine,
Until this earthly part of me
Glows with Thy fire divine."

XXII

THE OLD ROAD AGAIN

"Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing."—JOHN xxi. 3.

Do we feel that this is a mean and trifling descent from the great and solemn themes which are described in the previous chapter? The disciples have been living in repeated thrills of wonder. And now, is it possible that they can quietly settle down again to the old tasks, and from the awful glory of the resurrection turn to the commonplace of fishing? Has the wonder faded? Has the warm glow become grey and cold? Have the colours of the marvellous sunrise changed into the quiet attire of the sober day? Has the surprise spent itself? "I go a fishing!" Is the glory over? Oh, no! The wonder of the resurrection, and the power of it, are now to mingle with the old conditions and transfigure them. When you begin to descend the Rigi, after witnessing the unutterable glory of some stupendous sunrise, you do not leave it all behind, you carry it with you, you bring it into the hurrying, sweltering movements of your own city, and it mixes itself with the grey and sombre circumstances of our common day.

"These beauteous forms,
Through a long absence, have not been to me

As is a landscape to a blind man's eye:
But oft, in lonely rooms, and 'mid the din
Of towns and cities, I have owed to them,
In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,
Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart:
And passing even into my purer mind,
With tranquil restoration."

Simon Peter had often gone a fishing, but never had he gone as he went in the twilight of that most wonderful evening. He moved about the shore with an amazingly enlarged consciousness; the imprisoning walls of his narrow lot had fallen down on every side, and on every side the light was pouring in from the infinite. He handled the ropes in a new style, and with a new dignity born of the bigger capacity of his own soul. Yes, he turned to the familiar task, but with a quite unfamiliar spirit. He went a fishing, but the power of the resurrection went with him. He spread the splendid colours of his Eastertide over the still grey surface of his common life.

Now, here is the true test of the reality of my spiritual experience: how does it fit me for ordinary affairs? A spiritual festival should do for the soul what a day on the hill does for the body, equip it for the better doing of the ordinary duties in the vale. I will test the essential value of any man's Easter by his behaviour in the following week. I will test the value of a Christian convention by the way in which its supporters pick up the lowly duties that wait on the undecorated road. When the special revival is over, and the exciting meetings are done, and the

sensational day wears toward evening, how do they return to the ordinary way, to the customary labours, to quiet domestic duties, to ugly social necessities, to the unapplauded round of church services, to the little prayer meeting with the two and three—how do they return to these things? Do they come back with that glorified consciousness which makes them "faithful in that which is least," or do they come back feeling that all these things are flat and tasteless, stale and profitless, and that they must seek a diet more highly spiced and exceptional? I remember once standing on Great Orme's Head, on a day of superlative beauty, a day when land and ocean and sky seemed to vie with one another in the amazing glory of their robes; and one who was near me turned and sighingly said, "Fancy auctioneering after this!" Yes, and fancy fishing after the resurrection! If, after the Easter morn, the old beach seems a cold and colourless strip, and our old fishermen mates are dull and flavourless, and the old fishing boat stinks in our nostrils, and we turn to the work with loitering feet, we may be perfectly sure that we have never gazed upon the real glory of the risen Lord, for it is the inherent ministry of the spiritually extraordinary to make the ordinary attractive. "Even the bells upon the horses shall be holy unto the Lord." "After these things . . . Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing."

Here, then, I say, is an unerring test of the reality of a spiritual experience, it gives us a keener appetite

for common duty. It is beautiful to watch the Psalmists, and to listen to them when they return from communing with the Lord. For this is the song upon their lips, "O, how I love Thy law!" It is an extraordinary combination, affection gathering round about a statute, a glowing passion gathering round about a restraint. The Psalmist had not always delighted in the law of his Lord. There was a day when he accepted it like bitter medicine, and he took it with a very wry face, but now he has been spiritually exalted, his moral palate has been renewed, and the law of the Lord is in his mouth "as honey for sweetness." When a man smacks his lips over duty, and not over an evasion of duty, you may securely reason as to the depth and reality of his communion with God. "Thy statutes have become my songs." This is the test—how do our resurrection experiences certify themselves in common life? Does the power of the resurrection pervade our ordinary toil? Does drudgery rise from the dead, and appear a creature with wings? Is there a new atmosphere in our business, the nimble, living air of the Easter morn? Do men find it easier to breathe, a joy to breathe, when they come into our communion, even though our intercourse be concerned with comparative trifles? Is there a fine tonic in the air, and do men go away from our presence saying, "It was like a breath from the hills"? That is a proof of the resurrection. And do all our cold conventionalities become alive, and warm, and brilliant, like

dull carbons when the mystic electrical energy possesses and pervades them? Is there a finer grace in the courtesies on the beach because of what happened "on the first day of the week" upon the hill? These are the tests, and by these we may know how intimate or how remote has been our fellowship with the risen Lord. "The Lord is risen indeed!" Is He? "We have seen the Lord!" Have you? "He hath appeared unto Simon!" Has He? Then there will be evidence down on the beach, and we shall see the glory of the Eastertide in the kindling of lowly duties, and in the illumination of the common road. "Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing!"

But, now, this healthy action of Simon Peter is not only a test and a proof of a past spiritual experience, it is a preparative to a renewal of it. Peter might have laid aside his ordinary fisher's coat, and, if he possessed any, he might have arrayed himself in his holiday attire, and gone moving about in a sort of spiritual loitering, looking wistfully for the reappearance of his risen Lord. He might have been tempted to reason in this way, "It will be risky to go off on the boat, for while I'm away on the sea the Master may come! I had just better 'watch and pray,' and risk the livelihood for a day or two!" "The Lord is mindful of His own! He remembers His children!" But no! He girt his fisher's coat about him, got into his workaday dress, and thus he reasoned with himself: "It cannot be wrong, even after all the bewildering experiences of the last few

days, and with all the remorse which troubles my days and nights, it cannot be wrong to set about earning one's living in an honest way! If the Master comes He will know I'm about my needful work, and mayhap He will call it His Father's business! I go a fishing!" Ay, and that road of common duty was just the way appointed for another meeting with his Lord, for in the morning light there came a voice across the waters, "Children, have ye any meat?" "And that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord!"

And so Easter was repeated to men who were faithfully treading the path of duty, and who were going about their ordinary work. The Lord appeared again, and their Easter faith was confirmed. Now I think that just here is where so many of us fail. Our spiritual experiences fade away, like "insubstantial pageants," because we are negligent of some appointed road of work and duty. There is a bit of grey service waiting, a colourless patch of uninteresting routine, a dull stretch of dingy street, and at the end of it the risen Lord! But people prefer to hug their past experiences, to pore over them, to meditate by the empty tomb, and thereby seek some further revelation which will allay the last uncertainty and kill the lingering doubt. And they wait, and wait, and wait—and the colours of the first revelation begin to grow faint, and doubts annoy, and fears increase, and they begin to wonder if they have ever seen the Lord at all. And all the time their boat is

stranded idly on the beach—and, did they only know it, in the call of a neglected task they may hear the voice of the risen Lord. I am growingly amazed at the number of people who are depressed and troubled with spiritual doubts and fears, and who, when one comes to enquire, are neglecting some immediate means of obtaining light and witness from the living God. There are people in every congregation who are groping in a deepening twilight, and who are painfully moaning,

> "Where is the blessedness I knew
> When first I saw the Lord?"

and if they would only gird themselves with their fisher's coat, and jump into the first duty that presents itself, and row strong, and work hard, they would see their Lord again, and in the morning they would hear His gracious voice across the waters, and their heart would leap for joy. We are never going to retain the Easter light if we are surrounded by neglected tasks and duties. Here, at any rate, honest fishing will sustain the wonder of the empty tomb. Lazy disciples will inevitably lose their Lord. He is waiting for thee at the end of "the long unlovely street," or on the quiet beach where the morning boat comes in, or in the hospital ward, or in the humble cottage where pain and death have been—somewhere, I tell thee, at the further side of some neglected duty, the Master tarries for thee: then be "up and doing," and "the joy of the Lord shall be

thy strength." "I have waited for Thee in the way of Thy commandments."

And may I not also say that this glorious discharge of immediate duty is surely the best way of proclaiming the realities of Easter and the glory of the risen Lord. The world will believe in the secret of our Easter when our humblest duties and relationships burn and shine with the light divine. There is nothing which so startles the world like a dull commonplace made alive and brilliant. Transformed rubbish heaps are centres of perennial fascination. To see a bit of work, once carelessly and indifferently done, now so done that it makes folk think of the kind of work which must have been turned out from the carpenter's shop at Nazareth! To see a once rough formality converted into a finished courtesy by the grace and geniality of Jesus! To see the light of the risen life lighting up our trifles, and distinguishing them like street lamps along a dark, dingy road—all this, I say, would startle the old world into reverent and fruitful wonder.

"Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee." The example proved contagious. Sanctified common sense is very mighty. They were a little company of bewildered men, whose minds had been stretched to the reception of amazing experiences, and they were just palpitating in uncertainty and confusion. And then one sane man strikes across the confusion

with this definite purpose, "I go a fishing," and the distracted minds collected themselves around this common end. "We also go with thee!" It was a fine lead, with a splendid issue. Let us strike that note, and amid all the mental disturbance and the theological reconstruction of our time let us keep our wills dead set to the doing of the immediate duty, and in the glorification of common life we shall never lose touch with the risen Lord. "Well done, thou good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things, enter thou," it is an ever-breaking revelation, glory upon glory, "into the joy of thy Lord!"

By G. CAMPBELL MORGAN

Expositories

The Study and Teaching of the English Bible. Cloth, - - - - - net $.50

The Missionary Manifesto. Being a Study of the Great Commission. - - - - net .75

The Analyzed Bible. 8vo, Cloth, each, - net 1.00
Vols I, II, III, Introductory Volumes. Vol. IV, The Gospel According to John. Vol. V, The Book of Job. Vol. VI, Romans Vols. VII, VIII, The Prophecy of Isaiah, I and II. *Other Volumes to follow.*

The Parables of the Kingdom. Expositions of Matt. XIII. - - - - - - - net 1.00

The Crises of the Christ. *Popular Edition,* net 1.50

The Spirit of God. Cloth, - - - net 1.25

A First Century Message to Twentieth Century Christians. - - - - - net 1.00

God's Methods With Man. In Time—Past, Present and Future. With Colored Chart, - - 1 00

Wherein Have We Robbed God? - - .75

God's Perfect Will. - - - - net .50

The Ten Commandments. - - - net .50

The Hidden Years at Nazareth. - - net .25

Devotional

Christian Principles, 16mo, Cloth, - - net .50

Mountains and Valleys in the Ministry of Jesus. 18mo, Boards. - - - - - net .25

The Practice of Prayer. 12mo, Cloth, - net .75

The Simple Things of the Christian Life. 16mo, Cloth, - - - - - - - net 50

The True Estimate of Life and How to Live. An entirely new, enlarged and revised edition. Gilt Top, net .80

The Christ of To-day. What? Whence? Whither? - - - - - - - net .35

The Life of the Christian. - - - net .50

Evangelism. - - - - - net .50

Life Problems. - - - - - .50

Discipleship. - - - - - .50

"All Things New." A Message to New Converts. Paper, - - - - - - net .10

Christ and the Bible. 16mo, Paper, - - net .05

By Robert E. Speer

Paul, The All-Round Man
16mo, cloth, net 50c

The Master of the Heart
12mo, cloth, net $1.00

The Marks of a Man
12mo, cloth, net $1.00

Young Men Who Overcame
12mo, cloth, net $1.00

Missions and Modern History
2 vols, 8vo, cloth, net $4.00

Missionary Principles and Practice
8vo, cloth, net $1.50

A Memorial of Alice Jackson
12mo, cloth, net 75c

A Memorial of Horace Tracy Pitkin
12mo, cloth, net $1.00

A Memorial of a True Life
A Biography of Hugh McAllister Beaver. With Portrait. 12mo, cloth $1.00

A Young Man's Questions
12mo, cloth, net 80c

The Principles of Jesus
In some Applications to Present Life.
16mo, net 80c

Christ and Life
The Practice of the Christian Life.
12mo, cloth, net 80c

Studies of the Man Paul
16mo, cloth, 75c

Studies of "The Man Christ Jesus"
16mo, cloth, 75c

Remember Jesus Christ
And other Talks about Christ and the Christian Life. 16mo, cloth, 75c

The Deity of Christ
18mo, boards, net 25c

WORKS OF

W. L. Watkinson, D.D.

The Fatal Barter
and other Sermons. 12mo, cloth, net, $1.00.

Frugality in the Spiritual Life
and other Themes for Meditation. 12mo, cloth, net, $1.00.

The Supreme Conquest
and other Sermons Preached in America. 12mo, cloth, net, $1.00.

The Duty of Imperial Thinking
and other Essays on Themes Worth While. 12mo, cloth, net, $1.00.

Studies in Christian Character
16mo, cloth, gilt top, net, $1.00.

Studies in Life and Experience
16mo, cloth, gilt top, net, $1.00.

Education of the Heart
Brief Essays that make for character. 12mo, cloth, net, $1.00.

The Bane and the Antidote
and other Sermons. 12mo, cloth. net, $1.00.

The Blind Spot
and other Sermons. 12mo, cloth, net, $1.00.

Inspiration in Common Life
16mo, cloth, net, 35c.

Beyond the Natural Order

By Editor of the Chicago Interior.

Essays on Prayer, the Miracles and the Incarnation.

Net, 75c. **NOLAN RICE BEST**

Dr. Alexander Whyte says: "This is the best book on prayer and miracle I have ever read."

Principal Marcus Dods says: "Many thanks for Best. He is a man who thinks for himself, and thinks profoundly."

The Christian Method of Ethics

Net, $1.25. **HENRY W. CLARK**

By the author of THE PHILOSOPHY OF CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE. His work may well be called "a revelation," containing original, startling, profound yet intensely practical ideas about the Christian life.

My Belief: Answers to Certain Religious Difficulties.

Net, $1.25. **ROBERT E. HORTON**

Dr. Horton knows that the real difficulty with all our religious queries lies deeper than the question. He is not afraid of his subject and shows us why we can and must believe.

The Law of Christian Healing

Net, 75c. **DAVID BRUCE FITZGERALD**

Written with that definiteness and force which only comes with clear thinking; the argument is fresh and logical, and while the book is in the realm of the speculative its outcome is in the most practical sense spiritually stimulating.

The Bible and the Problem of Poverty

Net, $1.00. **SAMUEL M. GODBEY**

A studious, well-written book by the editor of the *Nashville Christian Advocate.* Answers very exhaustively the questions of those who want to know just what the Bible does teach regarding poverty.

The Starry Universe the Christian's Future Empire

Net, $1.50. **HORACE C. STANTON**

What Scripture reveals about the transcendent physical powers, privileges, and possibilities of the coming life. Evidences many, varied and strong that we are to explore and enjoy all the illimitable empires of our Father. Comfort for trouble is among the many inspiring deductions from this sublime doctrine. A book sane, logical, appealing to both intellect and heart.

AUG 21 1906

Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date: April 2006

PreservationTechnologies
A WORLD LEADER IN PAPER PRESERVATION
111 Thomson Park Drive
Cranberry Township, PA 16066
(724) 779-2111

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
0 017 458 467 9